

New York  
& Detroit's  
primary  
lessons

PAGES 7 & 8

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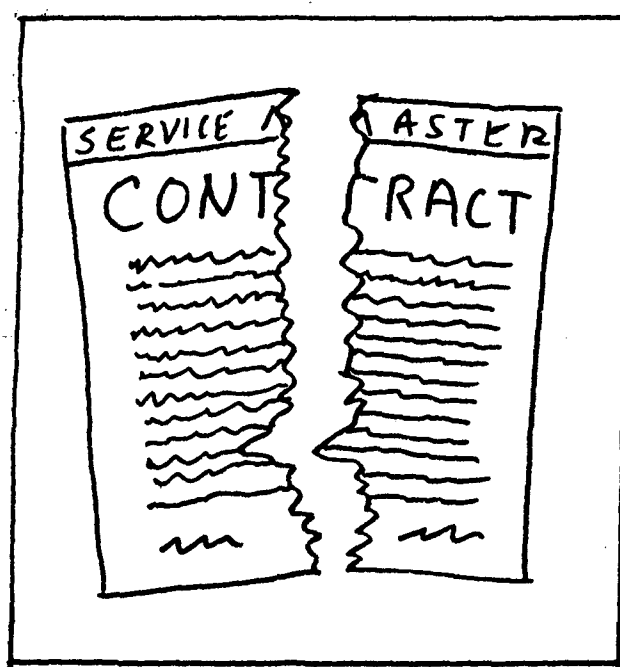
## The Occidental Tourist



James Weinstein

Diana Johnstone  
in the Soviet Union  
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# Workers, students teach Duke a lesson

By Tim Tyson

DURHAM N.C.

The high school seniors who, along with their parents, toured the grounds of Duke University here this past May saw an archetypal image of the scholarly community: wide lawns, gothic stonework, students with books slung casually from their arms, tweed-jacketed professors. But campus employees at Duke—those working on the loading docks and in the boiler rooms, laundries and bathrooms—were all but invisible.

The students who enroll or come back this fall, however, will learn that, invisible or not, Duke University can no longer overlook the vital role played by such workers. But the Duke workers, members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 77—virtually all of them black and most of them women—were not generously granted respect and acknowledgment from corporate boardrooms on high. They won it for themselves through a vigorous and spirited struggle.

Last spring, housekeeping workers at Duke, with take-home salaries running below \$200 a week, challenged and defeated ServiceMaster, an enormous corporation whose annual income exceeds \$1.5 billion.

The Duke fight is not only a good lesson about how determined workers can win even in a period when Southern labor is taking its lumps; it also demonstrates how a university workers' movement led by black women, with strong support from student activists, can emerge victorious.

ServiceMaster is the nation's leading institutional cleaning company, specializing in hospitals, office buildings and schools. It has been convicted twice for firing employees in a racially discriminatory manner and brags in its own promotional literature of its capabilities as a union buster. ServiceMaster's name is derived from the phrase "in service to the Master," which alludes to the putatively Christian philosophy of this monolith. After Duke's contract with ServiceMaster was canceled, one university administrator remarked, "They come off like 'Janitorial Services by Jerry Falwell'—I have no idea why we hired them."

Other administrators might not have such fuzzy memories. Duke signed a contract with ServiceMaster in December 1988 for the management of the school's housekeeping staff. There were several reasons for the move, including a national trend by institutional management to farm out cleaning work to service conglomerates. Although Duke's buildings were immaculate, there was a feeling within the administration that the job could be done more cheaply. Duke's new Capital Campaign, an arguably overambitious endowment effort with a stated goal of \$400 million, put a premium on thrift. ServiceMaster's sales rep had promised to bring down costs. The company is renowned for "low-balling"—offering low initial bids and then raising the price once the institution becomes dependent on its services.

ServiceMaster's opening act at Duke was to call a meeting on a half hour's notice at which employees were notified of their new overseer. Racism and condescension set the tone. "He [the ServiceMaster executive] said the first thing we need to do is to go to the chapel and pray," said one housekeeper, "because, he said, things were going to get rough on us."

"He kept telling us how his sister was a doctor and how much his suits cost, and how we need to better ourselves, shine our shoes and all," one worker reported. "It was 'boys' this and 'girls' that, and we didn't appreciate it one bit."

**The barber of servile:** The ServiceMaster man, employees noticed, was particularly obsessed with their hair. "He said, 'If you come in here with that hair all fried, dyed and laid to the side in those jeri-curls, you are wearing a hair net.'" This decree was expanded to include a strict prohibition against hats. Hats and hair nets perform the same function, of course, but hair nets are a traditional mark of servitude. How hats might interfere with mopping floors and scrubbing toilets was never explained. Hair, however, was not the most outrageous expression of racism in the new dress code. Each of the workers I interviewed repeated ServiceMaster's contention that "beige and brown don't look good on black people" and that new blue uniforms would be in order. "The way I see it," one woman said bluntly, "they're trying to take us back to slavery, this ServiceMaster."

Submission and discipline were also on the agenda. ServiceMaster told its new workers that their performance would be monitored by company observers dressed as students and faculty. "We don't know who they are," said one employee with 14 years service. "Are we that bad of people that they have to spy on us?" The evident purpose of the anonymous spying was intimidation since, as one worker noted, "with this type of work, all they have to do is check our areas and see if they are clean."

The most troublesome rumor for many workers was ServiceMaster's intention to create a work shift starting at 2 a.m., an effort to keep cleaning people invisible as well as silent.

"It does something to you—it ages you, working that graveyard shift," said one experienced janitor. For workers with children, a 2 a.m. shift presents obvious problems. In a workforce that is 85 percent women, there is also danger in having to work in isolated areas of a university plagued by rape and assault. "They don't care about that," said one woman. "What do they care about us? Nothing."

Workers began to talk about changing their situation. They first notified their union business manager, who was strangely unresponsive. Then workers began to recruit students to their cause, and an awkward but dynamic coalition was formed.

The workers soon discovered that students enjoy special freedoms that make them excellent allies. As everyone who has ever had a job knows, freedom of

speech has a way of stopping at the time clock. Students, however, have a special, temporary leeway to freely express themselves, a fact the workers used to great advantage.

Because several of the most able and energetic activist student leaders were African-Americans, it was difficult for the Duke administration to split the worker-student alliance along obvious class lines. It was also plain that Duke was sensitive to the negative image it had in Durham's black community and did not want to add fuel to that particular fire. There was fear in some quarters that retaining ServiceMaster would induce black students to carry out their explicit threat to "tell it like it is" at minority recruitment time.

The alliance between workers and students was mutually beneficial; students who participated learned much about the real world in the struggle against ServiceMaster, and friendships were forged among people who had not always seen each other as full human beings.

**The infernal paternal:** The student-worker alliance faced unavoidable difficulties. There was no way for students to speak out for workers without seeming paternalistic. This was especially true because the students were mostly white and the workers were virtually all black. At Duke, the biggest reason for the success of the coalition was that student activists stayed in constant touch with their worker allies and listened attentively each step of the way. Political skills and savvy were important, but the bottom line was remembering whose

## INSIDE STORY

fight this was.

Publicity and protest from the ranks forced the union leadership to take a tougher stand. This pressure made it clear that the union was more than just one or two leaders. Shop stewards and the rank and file initiated and led the fight. In the end, Local 77 officials came around and behaved responsibly and capably.

After two weeks of public outcry by workers and students, direct communication between the Duke administration and the workers came at last. Students arranged a meeting with President H. Keith H. Brodie in late March. They convinced him to come to a nearby seminar room where several of the workers waited. The workers then said their piece, recounting for Brodie the abuse that ServiceMaster had heaped on them. They showed Dr. Brodie the whisk brooms the corporation had issued them in place of long-handled brooms, a punishment for talking to the press. And they offered several reasonable alternative management structures.

A few days later, Brodie announced the university's decision to abandon the contract with ServiceMaster. That weekend, workers and students held a celebration picnic. It was a glorious occasion that none would have predicted given the cultural and political obstacles to such a triumph.

The victory over ServiceMaster energized Local 77. The union recently negotiated a pay increase more than double the usual 1 percent to 3 percent raise, mainly because it was able to negotiate from a position of strength. With strong rank-and-file leadership and renewed morale, the union can now, with its proven achievements, actively recruit more members. Student activism at Duke, in turn, received a tremendous boost, accelerating a two-year upswing and giving rise to previously undreamed-of possibilities for mobilizations with campus workers.

More broadly, it is encouraging that 180 service workers can shake themselves free from domination by a giant multinational corporation. The Duke University housekeepers' victory confirms that democracy can be a daily reality when people learn to cooperate across social barriers.

As one cleaning woman told President Brodie, "We do all the dirty work, and we should have some say-so." ☐ Tim Tyson is a freelance writer based in Durham, N.C.

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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

IN 1985 MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT) President Paul E. Gray explained to a congressional committee why American tax dollars should be used to foster closer relations between American corporations and universities. "If the Japanese have been eating our lunch," Gray said, it is "because they have been much more assiduous and effective ... at the process that takes an idea and translates it into something which affects the market."

Gray recommended MIT's Industrial Liai-

## BUSINESS

son Program (ILP) as a model for making American firms more competitive. In the program, they pay for privileged access to university research and thus "gain a window through which to view the developments of technological research which assist them in leapfrogging over the technical achievements of our foreign competitors," he said.

Gray's point might have been correct in the abstract, but investigations by the House Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations, chaired by Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY), have revealed that many of the firms MIT's program serves are Japanese and Western European. Instead of making American firms more competitive, MIT's program, partly financed through federal research grants, is aiding American competitors.

MIT's program is hardly the exception. Many elite American universities, including Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley, have set up liaison programs in which researchers, backed by taxpayer funding, give foreign businesses privileged access to scientific and engineering studies and even advice about marketing strategies. But MIT appears to be the grossest offender.

**Selling research:** MIT's Industrial Liaison Program was begun in 1948. According to the subcommittee's findings, MIT in 1975 established a sales office in Tokyo where it recruits new firms and where MIT professors can meet with representatives of Japanese firms. To belong to ILP, 300 corporations pay from \$5,000 to \$60,000 a year, depending on their size. Unions need not apply.

For their fee, corporations get to discuss research projects with MIT professors and see the professors' research before it is published. (It often takes as long as two years for scientific articles to be published.) ILP's catalogue states that the program places "at the disposal of industry the expertise and resources of all the schools, departments, centers and laboratories of MIT. It can assist its member organizations in making strategic business and technical decisions and help them identify business opportunities."

MIT uses a point system to encourage professors to cooperate with the program, with each point worth approximately \$35. Providing an article is worth one point; a phone call to a member firm is worth two; an on-campus visit with a firm's representative is worth two or more, and a visit to the firm is worth at least twelve. Some faculty members amass more than 100 points a year, which they can use for professional travel and office expenses, including computers.

Weiss and his staff got interested in MIT's program because the university's research



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## U.S.-funded research becomes foreign affair

is so heavily funded by the government. The federal government provides about 86 percent of MIT's half-billion-dollar annual research budget. MIT acknowledged that 337 faculty members who worked with ILP from 1984 to 1988 received at least \$100,000 each in grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Weiss's staff contacted the 10 professors in the MIT program who received the largest federal grants—between \$3.1 million and \$9.3 million from NSF or NIH. Eight of the 10 said that they dealt more with foreign than domestic corporations. Looked at in terms of points, they spent 34 percent of their time with American corporations, 30 percent with Japanese companies, and 36 percent with other foreign companies. The faculty also acknowledged that they discussed primarily their federally funded research.

Japanese corporations have praised MIT for providing them with important break-

throughs. According to *Business Week*, "NEC chairman Koji Kobayashi credits access to MIT's research for much of NEC's success in computers."

**Many elite American universities, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, offer programs that give foreign businesses privileged access to tax-funded studies.**

**MIT stonewalls:** Last June 13 Weiss' subcommittee held hearings on the MIT program. The hearings produced some amusing exchanges between the congressman and

Gray. The transcript reads as follows:

Weiss: "Are you at all concerned that American taxpayers are paying for research whose results are being sold to private industries that will not necessarily benefit the American public?"

Gray: "No sir, I'm not. I take exception to the statement in that it infers that we are selling these results to the Japanese or to other foreign citizens."

Weiss: "One MIT faculty member that we contacted does research pertaining to superconductors and liquid crystals. Through the Industrial Liaison Program, he met with scientists from several Japanese companies. Isn't it likely that such meetings could help a Japanese company compete more successfully against American companies?"

Gray: "I suppose it is possible, but I don't think it is necessarily likely and I think you might inquire of those faculty."

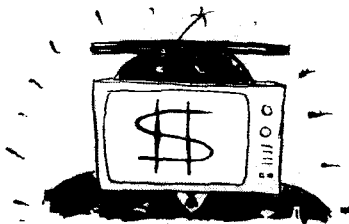
Since the hearings, MIT has stonewalled attempts by Weiss' staff to get more documents about the ILP. Weiss' staff is also seeking information on some 40 other industrial liaison programs.

Weiss' hearings created considerable controversy among educators. But rather than change their ways, college presidents appear determined to follow MIT's example. Richard M. Cyert, president of Carnegie-Mellon University, announced in July that his university will now solicit Japanese business support for its research. Cyert blamed the decision on American businesses' reluctance to support the university's programs. "I do not feel that American firms are responsive enough, and I don't believe we can get the kind of support we want—and need—strictly from American firms," Cyert told the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Leonard Minsky, the director of Ralph Nader's Coalition for Universities in the Public Interest, thinks that this attitude reflects a new conception of the university's role. "Since the end of the '70s, universities have begun to change from public institutions that serve the public interest to profit-making corporations," Minsky says. "What they have to sell is mainly science and technology, and it doesn't matter to them who they sell it to."

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### Stanford, corporations form integrated circuit



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Stanford is close behind MIT in giving foreign firms privileged access to government-funded research. It now has 37 different industrial liaison programs on campus. One of these is the Solid State Industrial Affiliates, established in 1958.

To become a member of the affiliates, a corporation pays an annual fee of \$10,000, part of which goes to the faculty member who will serve as the corporation's "liaison

officer." For this fee, corporations gain access to Stanford's electrical engineering department, one of the best in the country, and its Integrated Circuits, Ginzton and Solid-State laboratories.

Like the MIT program, the Stanford program allows member corporations to become intimately acquainted with faculty and student research well before it is made public. Every September, the faculty and students give the affiliates a special two-day presentation of research in progress.

There are currently 45 companies in the Stanford program, of which 18 are foreign-based. These include Hitachi, Toshiba, Sony, Matsushita, Mitsubishi and Thomson.

J.B.J.



By Joel Bleifuss

## The sky is falling

Drugs are our country's number one problem, according to the national media. Scientific surveys of concerned citizens prove that this is so, or, in other words, there is no doubt about which comes first: media chickens lay public opinion eggs. What is open for debate—continuing this poultry metaphor—is whether some sly weasel is not in the battery messing around with the chickens. A public hooked on the drug war may not have heard about it, but one newsworthy event has taken place since September 5, when President Bush, while declaring war, jiggled his bag of crack in front of a "stuporified" nation.

**September 6:** The Iran-contra scandal continued to unfold—former National Security Adviser John Poindexter is having his day in court. At a pre-trial hearing, one of Poindexter's lawyers, Frederick Robinson, asked Federal District Judge Harold Green to order President Bush to turn over notes on briefings given him by Reagan's former national security adviser. It is alleged that those notes will show that Poindexter was following an administration-wide policy in helping arm the contras with profits from Iranian arms sales at a time when support to the contras was prohibited by law. According to Robinson, Poindexter briefed the then-vice president about every meeting at which arms deals with Iran were discussed. In the past Bush has maintained that he was too busy to attend such meetings. Robinson told the court: "There have been a lot of statements made in the past that he wasn't at all these meetings where these things were discussed. That may be true, but any time he missed a meeting, Admiral Poindexter briefed him on it afterwards." Robinson also wants the court to order Ronald Reagan to turn over notes and diaries, particularly those concerning a July 1986 meeting. At that meeting, according to Robinson, President Reagan instructed Poindexter to lie to two House committees that were investigating allegations about administration support for the contras.

**September 11:** Judge Green ruled that President Bush and former President Reagan must turn over their notes and diaries if Poindexter can demonstrate that "they are material to the preparation of his defense." The judge gave Poindexter one week to file a brief establishing this fact.

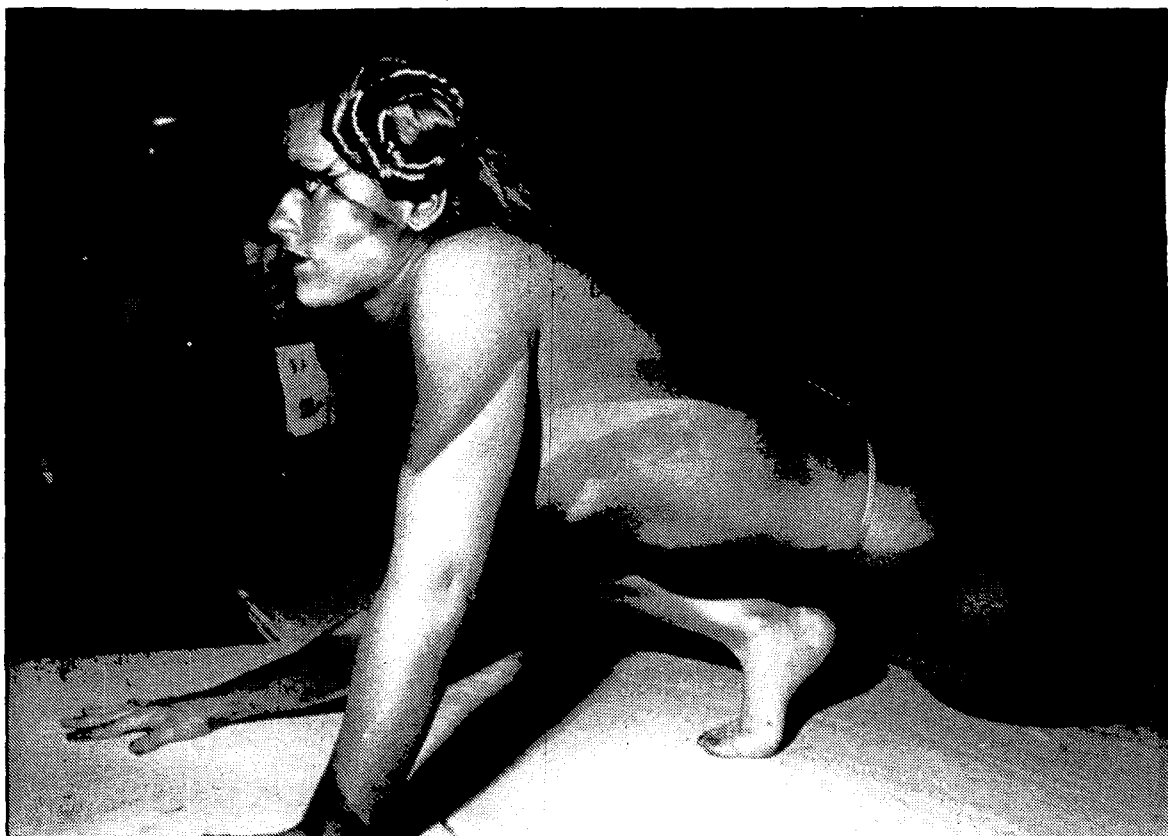
**Where was George?** Malcolm Byrne, an analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington, described the situation this way: "It seems pretty clear that Poindexter is following the same line that North was following. But he and his lawyers are making an even stronger argument to get materials from Reagan and Bush, including their diaries. Unlike North, Poindexter reported directly to both Bush and Reagan. It all depends on how much pressure the independent counsel is willing to and able to put on the Bush administration to release documents. This raises the issue again of what Bush's level of knowledge was. I think there is a good prospect for some interesting material to come out."

## The poor get theirs

"You know, the poor have never had it easy in this world," said George Bush to the prime-time audience that watched his September 6 drug speech. It's true that the crack epidemic is a corrosive force. It is devouring the neighborhoods where the poor people the president says such kind and gentle things about live. If things continue as they are, the crack crisis could hurt the poor as much as nine years of Reagan-Bush. But that appears unlikely. For example, who is going to pay for the drug war? The administration originally proposed that the drug war for 1990 be funded with \$751 million in spending cuts from other programs.

**Quick trick:** Bush told the nation he is "targeting \$50 million to fight crime in public housing projects—to restore order and to kick out the dealers for good." He did not explain that the \$50 million will come out of the public housing operating and maintenance fund. According to the Council of Large Public Housing Agencies, 60,000 public housing units now sit vacant due to disrepair.

**Cut it for the Gipper:** Bush originally proposed that \$40 million be taken out of juvenile justice and juvenile delinquency prevention programs. The Reagan administration tried to abolish this funding during each of its years in office. In 1989 the Bush administration gave it another try. It also failed, and Congress appropriated \$69 million for the programs. The Children's Defense Fund reports that between 1985 and 1987 the juvenile detention rate increased 12 percent. During the same period the number of juveniles held for alcohol and drug offenses increased by 56 per-



Bill Stamets

## City of voguers:

Vogueing may come to your town soon. "This is about what we are going to be doing next. It raises the ceiling on what people can do and enjoy," explains Alice McCoy of Tom Doody and Associates, the event management firm that produced The Chicago Voguers' Ball. Under the slogan, "Style for Life," the ball—a first for Chicago—was a benefit for the Howard Brown Memorial Clinic, an AIDS treatment and research center. Vogueing is a high-style hybrid of fashion modeling, performance art, club dancing and carnival camp. Voguers, bizarrely costumed, dance in teams known as "houses," at events known as "balls" where they vogue for prizes—best house, best house costume, best music selection, most outrageous house and so on. "Vogueing daringly breaks away from the standard serenity of the fashion runway," says Tom Doody. "It seemed to me when I woke up the next morning that it had all been dreamed, due to the surreal mix of people and imagery. The crowd was everything, stockbrokers, transvestites, macho men, models." "Techno-sexual" was the theme of the dancers shown here from House of Eso. They vogueed in costumes by Ray Paseka, the airbrush muralist who designed Esoteria, a club on Chicago's Near North Side.



Bill Stamets

## Drug war victims: a rain forest, restless natives and U.S. pot smokers

President Bush's speech calling for a \$7.9 billion expenditure for the war on drugs, with \$449 million of that headed for Latin America, has increased environmentalists' concerns that the real losers of this war

will be the ecosystem and the rural poor of Latin America—especially those living in zones controlled by insurgency factions.

In August the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund released a study on fumigation spraying in Guatemala. Among its findings: the drug eradication program in El Peten province affects the largest untouched rain forest in Central America—a forest that contains many endangered wildlife and plant species. In addi-

tion, the report documents the poisoning and death of agricultural workers present in fields during the spraying, while citizens who drank contaminated water from runoff into streams suffered ulcerations of the throat and tongue.

According to the report, Guatemala's northwest highlands region is being targeted for the eradication of marijuana and opium poppies, despite the fact that neither of these plants grows well there. Guatemala



has not been listed by the United Nations as a drug-producing nation.

"The spraying program targets areas identified as 'conflict zones,'" said Oswaldo Enriguez of the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission. El Peten province is the home of three distinct guerrilla movements within Guatemala.

"These U.S.-funded eradication programs are indiscriminately destroying the food crops of poor, mostly indigenous people in developing nations, poisoning their water supplies and wiping out wildlife. There are virtually no environmental controls," said Jane McAlevy of the San Francisco-based Environmental Project on Central America. "The spraying is occurring primarily in areas controlled by liberation movements that the U.S. government opposes. This is reminiscent of the scorched-earth Agent Orange policy used in Vietnam."

The Association of Humanitarian Lawyers, the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission and local and international environmentalists have called for a halt to the toxic spraying. Said McAlevy, "We'll be working with the international environmental and human rights communities to call attention to ecologically devastating drug eradication programs and counterinsurgency campaigns masking as drug eradication programs."

It is not only the health of Latin Americans that is endangered. A new study by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) indicates that marijuana smokers in the U.S. may also face increased health risks caused by the herbicide spraying that is an integral part of the war on drugs in Latin America. Spraying is expected to increase greatly with the new influx of aid.



The *Washington Post* recently reported details of an unreleased nationwide DEA study that showed that 10 percent of marijuana samples purchased on the streets of five major U.S. cities were contaminated with two herbicides—the known toxin paraquat and the unstudied glyphosphate. Both of these herbicides are used in the U.S.-funded war

on drugs.

The study analyzed 100 samples of marijuana bought on the streets of New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles. It is the first government study of pesticide residues in illicit drugs imported into the U.S.

Thomas Adamczyk, deputy chief of the Environmental Protection Agency herbicide section, told the *Washington Post* that the DEA findings are "certainly something that would raise concern." He stressed that without knowing the concentration levels of the herbicides it would be difficult to assess the health risks.

But DEA officials have said that their study was not designed to determine the level of residues and that they have no plans to determine these levels or their health effects on consumers. The DEA is also refusing to publicly release its report.

Glyphosphate—known in the U.S. by the name Round-up—was found in 3 percent of the samples and is used in drug eradication programs in Peru, Colombia, Belize and Jamaica. Paraquat, found in 7 percent of the samples, is widely used in Mexico. The Mexican paraquat spraying is part of a \$15 million U.S.-funded eradication program that critics claim is wholly ineffective because the marijuana can still be harvested after spraying.

—Todd Steiner

## City of brotherly love?

PHILADELPHIA When 15-year-old Stephen Crespo's head was crushed by a lug wrench in July, this city's Puerto Rican community nearly rioted. The incident brought into the open seething resentment against a new surge of racial violence and police abuse. The reaction was compounded by discontent over the community's isolation from the city's political and economic mainstream.

Crespo was killed after being chased down by 10 to 15 white youths. When police arrived to investigate, witnesses say, they ignored blacks' and Puerto Ricans' accounts of the incident. At first police dismissed Crespo's death as the result of a bad fall, a claim a medical examiner subsequently disputed. The Philadelphia Police Department later said the death resulted from a botched citizen's arrest. Crespo was allegedly stripping hubcaps from an abandoned car before the white youths gave chase. Police also insisted the attack was not racially motivated, although witnesses report that racial slurs were used.

One of the alleged attackers, Francis Scullin, was still at the scene when police arrived, but police let him go. Days later they arrested him on a third-degree murder charge. Only one other attacker was arrested—charged with obstructing justice for hiding the lug wrench in a nearby stream.

"I'm pissed off," said at-large city council member Angel Ortiz. In an

angry letter to police commissioner Willie Williams, Ortiz demanded a full investigation into the department's handling of the case.

Crespo's death followed by a few weeks the death of Sean Daily, a white youth from the city's Port Richmond section. The son of a city police officer, Daily was beaten and shot to death in revenge for the beating of a Puerto Rican youth, Rafael Droz, one week earlier. The police department mounted an immediate, massive investigation into Daily's death and eventually arrested 11 Latino suspects. Ten were charged with first-degree murder or conspiracy to commit murder. Ron Castille, the city's Republican district attorney who is running for re-election in November, says he will seek the death penalty against the 10 suspects. The Droz beating is not being investigated.

The Crespo killing begged comparisons to Howard Beach and Bensonhurst and fed deep resentment over a growing number of attacks on Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in the city.

In Philadelphia, Puerto Ricans have been the victims of at least six major incidents of racial violence or police abuse in the last 18 months. Dozens of other incidents, particularly in traditionally white neighborhoods where Puerto Ricans are beginning to settle, have gone unnoticed. Crespo's family lives in the mostly white Feltonville section of Philadelphia.

In 1988 the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice identified 473 cases of po-

lice minority conflict in 1988. Nearly one-quarter—110 cases—involved Latinos.

According to a 1987 report of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, "One of the effects of the Reagan administration's non-enforcement of civil rights laws is the signal which is sent to individuals with racist inclinations that violence against Puerto Ricans and other people of color is, if not officially sanctioned, less punishable than other crimes of violence."

Strangely silent about the recent incidents are Philadelphia's politicians, including some who count themselves as progressive. Only Ortiz and state Representative Ralph Acosta, Philadelphia's two Puerto Rican elected officials, immediately spoke out against the violence. As anger among Puerto Ricans escalated, the city human relations commission agreed to hold its first community meeting in years to hear their grievances. At the tumultuous meeting, community organizer Luis Sanabria said: "We will not be intimidated anymore. We need to start defending ourselves." His comment was greeted with wild applause by the more than 300 people present.

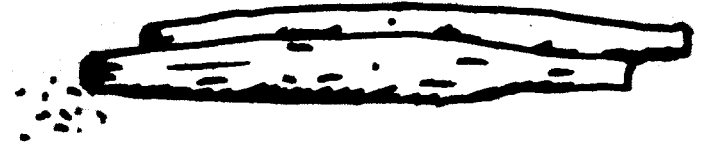
Four days later, the human relations commission announced it would hold hearings at the end of September to further investigate the complaints. Commission Chairman Thomas Ritter threatened to subpoena city officials to ensure their participation. "The Spanish-speaking community says something is wrong. I think something is wrong," said Ritter.

—Brian A. Kane

cent. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities of Washington, D.C., "If the nation wishes to better address the problems of drugs and juvenile delinquency prevention, cutting this program by more than half is of dubious merit."

## V.P. J.D.

In light of the drug war, it's time for an update on one of the more intriguing stories of the 1988 presidential campaign. On Nov. 4, 1988, four days before the election, Brett Kimberlin, a 34-year-old prisoner at the El Reno (Okla.) Federal Correctional Institution, was going to hold a press conference at which he planned to tell reporters that in the early '70s he regularly sold marijuana to then-law student Dan Quayle. The press conference had been pre-approved by the prison warden. But one hour before it was scheduled to begin, Kimberlin was thrown into solitary confinement. ("In Short," Nov. 16, 1988.) Aaron Freiwald, writing in *Legal Times* of Washington, D.C., reports that Kimberlin was confined on orders from Washington—specifically on orders from J. Michael Quinlan, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Freiwald writes, "Quinlan's unusual personal involvement in Kimberlin's treatment came amid a flurry of contacts throughout the pre-election weekend among the bureau, high-ranking political appointees at the Justice Department and senior advisers at Bush-Quayle campaign headquarters." Quinlan denies his action was politically motivated. But Kimberlin's allegations were of intense concern to the campaign managers. The campaign's deputy press secretary, Mark Goodin, told Freiwald that during its last days he regularly briefed campaign chairman James Baker III and Bush campaign chairman Lee Atwater on Kimberlin's status. Goodin was also in regular contact with the Justice Department. A campaign aide who declined to be named said the Bush-Quayle campaign was ready for damage control. As it was, there was no need for it.



## Say yes

There was a time way back in the '70s when many folks were talking about either decriminalizing or legalizing marijuana, including the young congressman from Indiana, Dan Quayle. ("In Short" February 16, 1988.) Those calls are now being voiced again as the inherent absurdity of this latest war on drugs becomes self-evident. Last week Chicago columnist Mike Royko wrote: "[T]he use of marijuana by America's white middle class has, in effect, been decriminalized.... So maybe we ought to stop playing 'let's pretend' marijuana is illegal. We might recognize that it is probably this country's biggest cash crop, then legalize and tax it." Don Fiedler, the incoming director of NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) hopes to put the legalization of marijuana on the national agenda. Fiedler, a 46-year-old Omaha, Neb., attorney, spoke to *In These Times* about this latest drug war. "The question that should be evolving out of the debate in Congress is whether marijuana should be included in the war on drugs. Our laws should be based on a relative-harm criteria. In other words, if there are drugs on the marketplace that are legal, like alcohol and tobacco, that study after study has said are more harmful healthwise than marijuana, then marijuana should be treated no differently. A conservative figure is that there are between 25 million and 30 million Americans who use marijuana. It is not that NORML disagrees that there is a crack and cocaine problem, we just disagree with the solution. If marijuana was excluded from the war on drugs, according to the *New York Times*, we would save \$14 billion a year in enforcement costs. But if it was legalized, we estimate it could raise \$30 billion to \$40 billion in tax revenue. With that type of funding available, we could be putting together programs that would really put some bite into the origins of drug abuse. Bush, Quayle and Bennett talk about how you will be doing your parents a favor if you turn them in if they are using drugs. What are we becoming in the name of a drug-free America? My goal as the new director is to get NORML involved in this national debate. Right now the 'R' in our name stands for 'reform'; I would like it to stand for 'respect.'"



By Dave Lindorff

ITHACA, N.Y.

**F**OR ALMOST TWO HOURS AFTER THE POLLS closed in this city's hotly contested Democratic primary for mayor, there were conflicting vote totals. Very early on, local radio and TV stations declared three-term incumbent John Gutenberger, a mainstream liberal Democrat, the winner.

Campaign workers and supporters who had gathered in the headquarters of the challenger, Alderman Ben Nichols, a 69-year-old retired engineer and lifelong socialist, couldn't believe what they were hearing. The vote tallies reported from all 20 election districts by the campaign's workers showed Nichols winning by almost 250 votes out of 2,200 cast, not losing by more than 700 out of 3,000 cast, as reported by the city's board of elections.

It turned out that the board had made a clerical error. As the correct tally was announced, clearing up the problem and confirming the Nichols campaign's figures, Marik Raqib, a middle-aged black member of Ithaca's rainbow movement, leapt up, punching his fist into the air. "We know where the

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power is now," he bellowed over the cheers in the crowded, sweltering room. "It's with the people. We have a real coalition now—not a rainbow but a coalition!"

On September 12 Ithaca's overwhelmingly Democratic electorate, by a margin of 1,238 to 982, dumped Gutenberger in favor of Nichols, a former Democratic Socialist of America local chairman, self-described "red" and longtime activist in progressive causes. Nichols' socialist roots go back to his childhood on Staten Island, where he was the son of two rank-and-file working-class members of the Communist Party.

Nichols, whose earliest political memories are of being taken to street-corner rallies on Staten Island where his parents would help pass out leaflets while organizers from the party or the Unemployed Council harangued passersby, won his upset victory as the candidate of a carefully crafted coalition of "reds" and "greens." His campaign was directed by the president of the local United Auto Workers (UAW) Union, Al Davidoff, a longtime labor activist. Foot soldiers were provided by both the local Rainbow Coalition, which had earned its political spurs by winning Ithaca for Jesse Jackson in the 1988 New York presidential primary, and by local environmentalists, whose mayoral candidate, Alderman Dan Hoffman, only two years earlier had come within 43 votes of taking the nomination from Gutenberger. Both Hoffman and a fledgling Green Party formed earlier this year endorsed Nichols.

Nichols and the "brown" coalition around his candidacy will still have to face Republican Jean Cookingham, a local attorney, in November. But his victory is virtually assured, thanks to both a two-to-one Democratic registration advantage and to Cookingham's outspoken anti-abortion position.

**Long time coming:** The red-green coalition that seems about to add Ithaca to that small list of cities across the nation that in recent years elected socialist mayors—Burlington, Vt., and Santa Monica, Berkeley and Santa Cruz, Ca., among them—did not develop easily. Indeed, for years progressive



Ithaca's Democratic mayoral candidate Ben Nichols: a red diaper and green jeans.

## A red-green coalition aims at Ithaca's city hall

political forces in Ithaca have been stymied by distrust and even outright conflict between the two groups. As the UAW's Davidoff pointed out in an election-day interview, during the 1987 mayoral primary the Tompkins Cortland Labor Coalition, a two-county labor federation he helps lead, endorsed and worked hard for Gutenberger's renomination.

For the left, minority groups and labor, abandoning Gutenberger and working for

**Ben Nichols, 69, a lifelong socialist, is the new favorite for mayor of Ithaca, N.Y., thanks to a unity campaign waged by labor, Rainbow Coalition activists and a newly fledged Green Party.**

Nichols this time around presented no problems.

"Ben is not the kind of candidate we will have to push to keep progressive," Davidoff said. "He is not the kind of candidate you have to remind to stand for something. In fact, he's often been the one to tell us to be blunter and more direct in our message."

After Nichols' election, an exhausted but elated Michael Cohen, a leader of the local Rainbow Coalition added, "With Ben as mayor, the challenge will be to think of what to do, not to persuade Ben to do it."

But, Davidoff observed, "the key to the success of this campaign was not the candidate. It was the coming together of the reds and greens—the rainbow and the environmentalists. And that was not easy. When we first started meeting last spring to consider a campaign, there were a lot of environmentalists who came with a lot of baggage about unions. There were people who had never sat next to a woman who'd say, 'I am a lesbian,' and probably some who had never sat in the same room with a black person before. What we did was bring these people all together so they could talk for the first time. We in effect broadened the rainbow so it could include all progressive forces."

Several people recalled an early coalition meeting at Nichols' home. At that session a veteran of Hoffman's 1987 campaign reported on that experience, ending with the fact that Hoffman had lost by only 43 votes. Someone else reportedly commented, "And most of those votes are in this room today." "It got a big laugh—maybe an uneasy laugh at first," recalls Davidoff, "but it was in a sense true."

Hoffman claims that he is a progressive who was painted into a single-issue environmental corner by Gutenberger supporters. Conceding that some in the environmental movement have been ignorant of or even hostile to the labor movement and have been on the opposite side of minority voters on some issues, he says, "In 1987 Gutenberger was able to play my [anti-development] position on housing as regressive. His supporters have been good at exploiting the differences in the progressive forces in a divide-and-conquer strategy."

"What was the deciding factor for me on whether to run again or endorse Ben was my analysis of the last election," he continues. "I had not been able to bring in all the elements of a progressive coalition that should have been in there because of a polarization between the environmentalist and the labor and minority wings. I think Ben was able to accomplish that because the environmental wing was willing and able to get around him even though the environment has not been a priority for him."

Nichols agrees with this view of his own politics. As early as the '30s, he was drawn into support for the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, and later, in 1939, he traveled to Washington to join a sit-in protest in local segregated drugstores. He says, "I think it's a fair statement to say that until recent years the environment has not been an issue for me. I've always been more concerned about whether people have a decent job or a place to live."

A retired electrical engineer (he was on the faculty at Cornell University for more than 40 years), he says, "Even when I joined the movement against nuclear power, it was not so much because of environmental concerns as because of nuclear power's connection to the military. But I would say that the realization of the need for protecting the environment has become increasingly clear to me. I now firmly believe that the two ideas [human needs and environmentalism] need to be firmly tied together."

Most people involved in Nichols' campaign seemed confident of victory almost from the moment it was clear that Hoffman and the Green Party would back him. As early as July, Davidoff, in an interview, called Nichols "a shoo-in." Still, now that he has won the party nomination and almost certain election in November, the movement, still reeling over its victory, seems unsure of its next step.

"I don't want to exaggerate the significance of what we've done tonight," said Cohen, "but in a small way, I feel a little like the Sandinistas back in 1979, marching into Managua. There's a big difference between always opposing and suddenly having power. The danger is that you frustrate people's hopes."

That could happen easily in a state like New York, which has never given much local

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By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

**T**HE WEST GERMANS CALL IT THE "TWO-thirds, one-third economy," meaning that while two-thirds of the population has benefited from the revved-up, financially driven economy of the '80s, one-third has fallen behind. But with the '80s already slipping down the memory hole, the formula may be in need of revising. Two-thirds may still be winning, but one-third are so unnerved at what's happening on the lower rungs that they're beginning to lose heart.

Such seems to be the lesson of liberal Democrat David Dinkins' stunning victory in last

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week's Democratic mayoral primary. On one hand, compared to the grim '70s, the average New Yorker has made out well during the 12 years of Ed Koch's reign. Employment has risen 12 percent and construction has boomed, while soaring real estate values have vastly inflated the wealth of the middle class. Gentrification has taken formerly decaying areas of the East Village and the Upper West Side and made them chic, while the economic pace is quickening even in hard-hit slums like Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant.

On the other hand, if a majority of New Yorkers are still winning, a substantial minority are taking it on the chin. While overall employment is up, manufacturing jobs have fallen 30 percent, meaning that thousands of unskilled and semiskilled workers, primarily black and Hispanic males, have found themselves locked out of the labor market since Koch took office in 1978.

The real estate boom has not only raised the value of homes and apartments, thus adding to the equity of those who already own housing, but has also given landlords the excuse to throw marginal tenants into the streets. When you add in those among the poor who have run afoul of the welfare bureaucracy, you have a whole new subclass of the homeless and hopeless who are too discouraged, depressed or mentally incapacitated to even take part in the relief system.

Moreover, the result—mass homelessness—has proved deeply unnerving for middle and working-class New Yorkers alike. By the mid-'80s, when flocks of beggars began showing up at subway stations, it began to dawn on even the most self-involved yuppie that something in the political economy was seriously amiss. The crack war, which is what happens when an authoritarian battle against drugs collides head-on with an underground, semi-laissez-faire economy, has further frayed the city's nerves, as have AIDS, racial tension, violent crime and Koch's increasingly desperate defense of his own lopsided economic policies.

Thus, in proper dialectical fashion, the runaway Manhattan boom has sowed the seeds of its own destruction. Financial speculation has led to a real estate explosion, which in turn has led to homelessness and the desire for political change. This has led to antithesis and now to a synthesis in the person of a mild-mannered machine Democrat named David Dinkins. The end, in other words, is in sight. Relief is on the way.

**Assessing reality:** Or is it? During Dinkins' tumultuous victory celebration at the Penta Hotel in midtown Manhattan, it was tempting to conclude that it was. Enthusiasm is contagious, but anyone who scrutinizes

# Is good-guy Dinkins ready to Koch hell?



New York Democratic mayoral candidate David Dinkins: a regular guy in many ways.

Dinkins' political record can't help concluding that the pattern is not much different from Koch's. In some ways Dinkins is better, in some ways worse. He's more compassionate than Koch when it comes to the poor and more sensitive when it comes to racism. While he's less offensive than Koch on any number of other issues, he's also likely to be less offensive when it comes to the economic powers who really pull the strings in New York, i.e., the banks.

"I don't care whether I'm down in some boardroom on Wall Street or in Queens with some Asian group or up in Washington Heights with Dominicans," Dinkins told *The New York Times* this summer. "I'm really very comfortable with all kinds of people because I genuinely like people." Such sentiments may seem decent. But a politician who regards Wall Street as simply another constituent group to be placated along with Asians or Hispanics is unlikely to stand up to the city's Wall Street creditors.

So who is Dave Dinkins and why are so many people saying such nice things about him? First the good news: Dinkins has shown considerable skill in maneuvering in the minefield of New York racial politics. Torn between black nationalists on one side and liberal integrationists on the other, he has tried to do the right thing and has frequently succeeded.

In 1985 he went along with a coterie of black politicians who zapped the budding mayoral campaign of a leading Puerto Rican

politician named Herman Badillo merely because Badillo happened not to be black. A year later, however, he denounced anti-Semitic statements by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, even though others in his inner circle refused. He also denounced last year's bizarre Tawana Brawley hoax, although belatedly and mildly. Is Dinkins thoughtful and deliberate? Or merely dilatory and indecisive? The answer, very likely, is both.

Now the middling news: While Dinkins is passionate about fighting apartheid, he's no

**Dinkins has showed talent at maneuvering in Gotham's shark-infested political seas. But he seems to treat the sharks as just another political constituency.**

better than most other politicians in New York on the subject of Israel, which is to say he's awful. For Dinkins, fostering good black-Jewish relations seems to mean going out of his way to be more Zionist than the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. In 1985 he even traveled to West Germany to protest Ronald Reagan's visit to the Nazi military cemetery at Bitburg, a decent gesture, but

one indicative of his notion of balancing competing ethnic interests.

And now for the bad news: in return for strong labor support, Dinkins last summer suggested reducing New York state's heavy Taylor Law penalties against public-employee strikes, only to do an about-face when Koch and others accused him of giving municipal unions the store. (Repeal of the repressive Taylor Law would give public employees in New York the same rights to strike now enjoyed by Soviet coal miners in Siberia and the Ukraine.) He also proposed raising the city income tax and lowering the sales tax, another progressive measure that he backed off from when it was pointed out that New York City bonds are pledged against sales tax receipts.

**Crime and punishment:** As one who likes to think of himself as a law-and-order man second to none, Dinkins has joined with the other mayoral candidates in supporting military-style bootcamps for drug offenders, this year's quick fix for politicians hooked on punishment and repression. While he doesn't go as far as City Comptroller Harrison Goldin in calling for the jailing of anyone who tests positive for cocaine or heroin regardless of whether they've committed a crime, he does believe that parolees who test positive should be thrown back in the slammer forthwith.

On the question of drugs and AIDS, finally, Dinkins's views are retrograde in the extreme. Taking his lead from his friend and associate Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), the hard-line chairman of the House select committee on narcotics, he rejects any suggestion of decriminalization and angrily insists that the only answer is more cops, more border interdiction and tougher sentences. Worse, he opposes New York's extremely important pilot program to distribute clean hypodermic needles to prevent the spread of AIDS and even opposes publicly funded efforts to teach addicts to clean their own needles using ordinary household bleach.

Thus, one of the few good programs inaugurated under Koch will likely close down if Dinkins takes office. This is tragic not only because 100,000 junkies in New York are believed to be infected with the human immunodeficiency virus, but also because city health officials estimate that perhaps 25,000 women who do not shoot drugs have been infected as well through heterosexual intercourse with those who do. These women are predominantly black and Hispanic, the poorest of the poor. They may not be aware that their male sexual partner or partners shoot up, which makes them unknowing victims of the latest stage of the AIDS epidemic.

As the man who toppled Ed Koch, Dave Dinkins is the liberal hero of the hour. He put together a coalition of blacks, Hispanics, labor unionists and white liberals, which is unusual for New York Democratic politics. What's more, he managed to keep things from flying apart during the primary campaign, which was even more remarkable.

But just because Dinkins managed a delicate balancing act is no reason to give short shrift to his political record. Dinkins is a mainstream Democrat staggering under the usual load of deadweight political baggage. This is a bit of news that should surprise absolutely no one. Nonetheless, it's simply facts like these that often manage to get lost amid the hoopla of a political election. □

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## By Salim Muwakkil

DETROIT

**T**HE BIG STORY OF THIS CITY'S SEPTEMBER 12 primary election was not who won, but who came in second in the Democratic race. As expected, four-term incumbent Mayor Coleman Young coasted to an easy victory and will try for a fifth term in the November 12 general election. Not so expected, however, was the victory of runner-up Tom Barrow over Rep. John Conyers

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(D-MI), who has represented the city in Congress for 25 years.

Barrow's second-place victory in the 13-candidate field sets up a return of the 1985 general election that he lost to Young by a 61-39 percent margin. Most pundits predict Young will easily defeat Barrow in the November 12 election. But Barrow—a 40-year-old accountant/entrepreneur and nephew of a local hero, boxer Joe Louis—has fooled the pundits before.

Barrow has been on the campaign trail since his 1985 loss to Young, developing a well-honed political organization and cultivating a certain following among disaffected young black professionals and the city's dwindling white population—most of whom revile the incumbent. If he can extend his reach to those members of the so-called ABC (Anyone But Coleman) constituency who voted for Conyers or Erma Henderson—the respected City Council president who was the fourth major mayoral candidate—he may even be able to defeat Young in the general election.

"It seems pretty sure that most of the city's progressives will flock to Young's candidacy," predicted Tony Rothchild, a Detroit-based aide of Rep. George Crockett (D-MI). Many of the elected officials in this fiercely pro-union town have expressed concern about the conservative tone of Barrow's views. For example, his insistence that all candidates for public office and their staffs be tested for drugs struck a discordant note among the liberals and civil libertarians who dominate city politics.

The tandem of drugs and crime has skewed the views of all the candidates, however. It was difficult, for example, to reconcile Conyers' campaign commercials urging more police to "make Detroit safe again" with the zealous congressman attacking police abuses in his role as chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice.

But Conyers was far from alone in this law-and-order stance, and for good reasons. The problems of crime and random violence have so deteriorated the quality of life in the nation's sixth-largest city that all serious candidates for public office are obliged to propose tough, crime-busting solutions.

Council President Henderson was the only major candidate to focus on issues other than improved law enforcement as a solution to the crime problem. Her proposal for an aggressive social intervention program designed to identify youth at risk and then provide them with a comprehensive array of assistance services was perhaps the most noteworthy idea to come out of the primary campaign. The 72-year-old Henderson, who was the first black citywide elected official and, like Conyers, is a longtime Young ally, polled about 5 percent of the primary vote.

**No problem:** At the other extreme was Young, who downplayed the issue of crime although it was listed as the No. 1 concern for the city's increasingly desperate citizens.

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Detroit Mayor Coleman Young: losing allies but keeping votes.

## Young and restless is Motor City's message

"Detroit is no longer the 'murder capital of the world' because in recent years we have made considerable progress in our fight against crime," Young told reporters of the *Metro Times*, a city weekly. "Additionally," the mayor said, "according to the latest FBI statistics, for the last four years crime has been down 18 percent in Detroit, a better rate than any city of more than 1 million anywhere in the country."

The city may drop below 1 million in the 1980 census. When Young became the city's first black mayor in 1973, Detroit's population of 1.4 million was about evenly divided between blacks and whites. In 1989 African-Americans comprise nearly 70 percent of the estimated 1.08 million residents. Both Conyers and Barrow cite crime as the reason for the population drop. The exodus was not fueled by "white flight," Conyers charged, but "fear flight," a pattern he attributed to Young's ineffective handling of the police department.

**Dueling legends:** The question most commonly asked during the campaign was why two of Young's former allies decided to run against him. Both Conyers and Henderson were part of the black political movement that catapulted Young into the mayor's seat, and the three politicians have remained close throughout Young's 16-year tenure.

"Having Conyers and Henderson in the race divided the black community and helps dilute the little bit of black power that we do have," complained Lamar Lemmons, a prominent community organizer from the city's East Side and a Young supporter. He charged Conyers was motivated by selfish reasons and hinted that other forces were behind the congressman's efforts.

Talk of a white conspiracy to take back the city is heard most often from Young supporters, and the incumbent does little to discourage those conversations. Although Young is supported by the city's largest unions, churches, and civic and political organiza-

tions, as well as by a wide range of white business interests, he is viewed by the city's militant activists as an uncompromising soldier in the black struggle. What's more, the incumbent is praised for improvements in the city that are hard to see with the naked eye, while even his glaring mistakes are ignored.

**Bull-headed contempt:** According to Barbara Martin, chair of an influential black nationalist political group called the Black Slate, any mayor but Young would serve to restore white power to Detroit. "The powerful white news media is fighting to re-establish white control of Detroit," Martin said. "Only the re-election of Young and incumbent black councilmen will enable us to save our city."

Neither of the city's two major newspapers endorsed Young. The *Detroit Free Press* supported Conyers and the *Detroit News* supported Barrow. Both publications accused Young of arrogance and insularity. "We believe," wrote the *Free Press* in its editorial endorsing Conyers' candidacy, "that Detroit cannot afford four more years of gambling

## Despite growing disenchantment, Detroit primary voters stick with a battered but unbowed Coleman Young.

crusades, neighborhood frustration, bull-headed contempt for environmental concerns, and the absence of a creative effort to end the racial polarization of the metropolitan area."

This media criticism of Young—and it has been incessant—has convinced many blacks that the white press has ill will for

the city's African-Americans. And, despite the fact that both Henderson and Conyers are bona fide political legends in black Detroit, they are seen as conspirators in the plot against Young.

Conyers said he entered the race to revive the city's economy and provide jobs, and to restructure the police department to provide security for Detroit's crime-weary citizens. Silent for 16 years, the congressman suddenly became an outspoken critic of Young's concept of municipal development. The mayor has failed, Conyers said in a recent interview, "because of his attraction to magnum opus deals, multibillion-dollar deals.... Because of these deals the city got taken to the cleaners.... We lost more than we gained, plus we mortgaged into the future and declined the neighborhoods."

**Circling sharks:** Conyers had begun echoing the criticism of those who had long charged that Young was ignoring neighborhoods' needs by focusing his economic development schemes on attracting corporations and big projects. His cause was right but so late that many observers speculated the real reason Conyers ran was the smell of Coleman Young's political blood.

Earlier this year several opinion polls revealed that Young was wearing out his welcome with constituents. And, on the heels of those polling results, the mayor was dragged publicly through a paternity dispute in which he was proven the father of a child born to a former aide. To Conyers and Henderson, Young must have seemed supremely vulnerable.

Barrow's second-place finish is probably more a function of his superior organization than his appeal, which, even his supporters admit, is dubious. Widely heralded as energetic and dedicated, Barrow has nonetheless been criticized as a bland technocrat with no humanizing vision for the city.

"It's Tom's vagueness that paradoxically makes him so appealing," explained Ronald Knox, a Barrow supporter who works as a computer technician in the criminal justice system. "People are discontent about things in the city, and Tom has a way of tapping into all of those angles of discontent without being too specific. It's actually a great political gift."

Barrow, a graduate of Wayne State University, started his own accounting firm in 1975 at the age of 26. In 10 years it was the largest minority-owned accounting firm in Michigan. He began sharpening his political claws in a campaign against a referendum to allow casino gambling in the city; his leadership is credited with defeating the measure. He was a political neophyte during his 1985 mayoral campaign and made many mistakes, losing by a margin of 22 percent. But in 1989 he runs a smooth political operation with a computer system that clusters and sifts demographic data for fundraisings and mailings.

"I think Barrow's a highly articulate, extremely ambitious and very determined person," said Morris Gleicher, a respected political consultant. "But I don't see any political ideology or strong commitment to the oppressed, the homeless, the poor on a sort of personal level."

Barrow's technocratic solutions and "buppie" sensibilities leave many in Detroit's left-leaning establishment cold. But the crises in the city's crime-riddled neighborhoods have changed Motown's traditional political landscape. In this new configuration anything can happen, even Mayor Barrow. □



By Franek Michalski

## Cabinet's painful task: reform crisis economy

IF NOT FOR POLAND'S GASPING ECONOMY, NEW Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki would have good reason for optimism. After a turbulent summer of negotiations, he has managed to put together a Cabinet that balances Solidarity, communists (Polish United Workers Party, or PZPR) and two smaller parties, the Peasant Alliance and the Democratic Alliance.

The PZPR has submitted to a power-sharing arrangement, though not without reserving key posts for itself. Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski retains the strong office of president, Gen. Florian Siwicki and Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak hold, respectively, the portfolios of

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defense and interior (security police) and other communists hold transportation (considered important to the Warsaw Pact) and foreign trade.

The Peasants and Democrats, until last month loyal allies of the PZPR in a rubber-stamp parliament, now support the Solidarity caucus in the first non-communist-led government in the Soviet bloc. The arrangement has the tacit approval of Mikhail Gorbachov, godfather of reform in Moscow, who seems too preoccupied with his own problems to interfere with the relatively orderly political changes in Poland.

**Entropy and emigration:** The economic problems facing Mazowiecki are formidable. Ten years of depression, decapitalization and debt have battered Poland's physical plant and its labor force. From 1979 to 1981 Poland suffered a 25 percent drop in GNP—a catastrophic slide matched only by the 1929 Great Depression. It was the result, in part, of misapplied and misappropriated foreign loans during the '70s. To recover, the Polish government tried to raise prices (with an ensuing general strike that gave rise to Solidarity), tried to impose longer working hours and stiffer productivity schedules (under martial law) and, later, tried to push through anti-inflationary schemes (the price rises that led to the 1988 strikes that re-legalized Solidarity). But as debt service mounted, there was less and less money for basic infrastructure maintenance. Roads, trains and factory and mine equipment have been, quite literally, driven into the ground.

Emigration—political exile as well as the search for hard-currency jobs—has depleted and demoralized the labor force. Ten years of endless daily queues for shoddy and insufficient basic goods have piled insult on injury. In 1980 waiting in line was accepted in a spirit of camaraderie. An etiquette of "keep my place" developed, and the rights of seniors and the handicapped to cut ahead were respected. Now one hears frequent stories of frustrated citizens pushing aside people on crutches, accusing them of not wanting to wait their turn.

The new government must not only find a way to halt this desperate downward spiral, but to do it while dismantling a state-owned command economy. The most recent attempt at reform, the outgoing Rakowski government's unfreezing of farm prices at the end of July, failed on all counts. Consumers complained because costs skyrocketed without increasing supplies. Workers struck for the 80 percent indexation (cost of living raises) they had been promised. And farmers

withheld taxes, demanding parity with the incomes of "indexed" workers.

The farmers' plight shows why raising official prices is not enough. Allowing agricultural prices to rise should be an incentive to production. But farmers, as well as urban family-owned businesses, are still bound to the rest of the economic chain: manufacture and distribution of tools and supplies, bank loans and tax policy and retail regulations. Each of these institutions, along with the local administrations of towns and counties, are hierarchically subordinate to central control and staffed under the party patronage system called *nomenklatura*.

In this system unfreezing prices leaves "private" entrepreneurs subject to the petty tyrannies and graft of county chiefs, while enriching those with the best *nomenklatura* connections.

The debate within Solidarity on the political implications of market reforms divides into three camps: laissez-faire liberalism, social democracy and just muddling through.

The liberals preach the minimalist state, private property and an unconstrained market. One highly publicized proposal called for a customs-free zone in the city of Krakow in which foreign capital would be invited to develop industry in an unregulated and untaxed environment. The plan reached the floor of the Krakow city council but died there when it became clear that, among other innovations, it would have turned the medieval city's old town section into a theme

park of tourist hotels and fast-food restaurants.

The muddle-of-the-road position, which regards itself as pragmatic rather than ideological, hopes that help from the West, hard work and a little bit of luck will make it possible to avoid both rapacious capitalism and the dotting, inefficient welfare state. Symbolic of this approach is the bailout of the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk now being negotiated with millionairess emigré Barbara Piasecka-Johnson. The Lenin yards were one of the few enterprises in the Gdansk

### The government must halt the steep downward spiral while dismantling the state-owned command economy.

region that didn't join in the one-hour general strike called by Solidarity on August 11. The action successfully demonstrated widespread support for the Walesa-Mazowiecki reform process and was directed as much against wildcat wage strikes as against management.

**Own and groan:** The social democrats support marketizing reform but recognize the pitfalls of privatization and seek to soften

its social costs. Jan Jozef Lipski, Solidarity senator and leader of the newly revived Polish Socialist Party, pointed out in the *Solidarność Weekly* newspaper August 11 that "state" property could not, in fact, be re-privatized because, for the most part, Poland's factories had been built from the ground up after World War II. They were paid for by a general lower standard of living for everyone. No privatizing reform will be accepted by working people that does not confront the issue of social property, Lipski warned.

In practical terms, this means converting "nationalized" enterprises into either joint stock companies or worker-managed firms, or to make the state a sort of holding company. Yet each of these schemes presents difficulties. Leaving factories under state control seems a non-starter because management would still not be accountable for efficiency. Self-management is attractive as a solidaristic solution, but, unfortunately, the historical examples leave key technical difficulties unsolved. Shares of stock? Selling them openly to the highest bidder would be painfully slow in a capital-poor country, or would mean lopsided debt-for-equity deals with foreign capital. A more egalitarian proposal would have the total of nationalized property distributed, one time, in the form of shares to all Polish citizens of legal age.

Reports from the Warsaw region indicate that workers accept the need for privatizing reform in general, but very few are happy with the way experiments toward that goal have been carried out in their workplaces. Uncertainty about ultimate legal status has led some managers to jockey for position, sometimes without consulting factory councils (which by current statute must approve all changes). Some enterprises have leased

*Continued on page 22*

### Will U.S. stinginess force Poles into grim Romanian-style 'belt-tightening'?

George Bush could just about lock up the Polish vote for the Republicans if he would only come across with some decent financial assistance for Poland.

Instead, U.S. aid policy might be described as the "trickle-over" theory. Or, in the words of Brent Scowcroft, Bush's national security adviser, "What Poland needs is not airlifts of money." Why the stinginess to the Poles, who greeted George Bush more warmly than anyone else on his European tour last July?

Here's a short list of arguments against aid to Poland:

- **The U.S. has problems of its own.** True enough, though the image of the president of the United States turning out empty pockets in place of political leadership is embarrassing. In terms of foreign policy objectives, the by-now-proverbial "one half of one B-2" could hardly be better spent than on a stable, democratic member of the Warsaw Pact.

- **The money will be squandered yet again by the bureaucracy.** If the Mazowiecki government is not proof enough against this argument, it should be very easy to target credits to the agricultural sector. Polish farmers would gladly produce more in the next growing season if they had access to tractors, seed and fertilizer. And they are a good bet for quick repayment.

- **"Poles will die for Poland...but few will work for it."** This could be dismissed as an ethnic slur except that it appeared in an economist's op-ed piece in the *New York Times* of July 6.

- **Well, maybe some aid, but Solidarity has asked for \$10 billion!** This figure, it is claimed, is simply the statutory maximum a country might receive in emergency credits from the international financial institutions in three years' time. And no country has ever received the maximum for one year, much less three.

This deserves a closer look. The \$10 billion request was made by Walesa to Bush in July, and it appears in line with the "global Keynesian" perspective on international debt outlined by Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs, among others. He argues that bankruptcy of a country like Poland, or its ruin by unmanageable debt, destabilizes the world economic system. Hence, debt forgiveness or measures easing the debt burden are in everyone's interest. Bankers, however, do not agree. Neither, apparently, does George Bush.

- **"There's no free lunch." Belt-tightening is necessary pain for past mismanagement.** Anyone preaching this Calvinist "poverty is its own punishment" doctrine to Poland ought to be clear on the consequences. The Poles believe that

they have austerity now. The next step is not the risks of free enterprise, but the methods of Romania's Ceausescu.

For it is Romania that is the true hero of "belt-tightening." Seven years ago its leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, promised to repay a \$10 billion foreign debt. Since then the country has been run as a nightmarish experiment on 23 million people. Electricity is turned off in entire cities for hours at a time, and coal deliveries are shut off in winter. Romanians have the tightest food rationing in Eastern Europe, the highest infant mortality rate, the most brutal and effective secret police and the fewest strikes. Ferocious industrialization has been accompanied by a "systematization" program in which huge tracts of land are leveled by bulldozers to build collective living complexes and clear space for "rational" cultivation. But the debt has been paid.

It is possible that Poland could turn off its lights and begin a national auction in an effort to meet International Monetary Fund criteria of fiscal responsibility without installing a demonic dictator. But a democratically elected parliament is likely to have more concern for a social safety net.

Bush should choose his friends carefully. He'll be known by the company he keeps. —F.M.



# Attempt to escape the tourist trap finds more than the Western model



By Diana Johnstone

MOSCOW

**B**ACK FROM HIS DACHA AT THE END OF THE summer, the Moscow reformist intellectual was worried about a lot of things. But his adherence to Mikhail Gorbachov's reforms was unwavering.

Like most people, Professor V. was worried about consumer-goods shortages. He was worried that the European Community single market was going to lure West German capital away from investment in Eastern Europe. Most of all, he was worried by the separatist movements in the Baltic States.

"Nationalism in the Baltic States poses the biggest problem," he said. This was a week after the human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in protest against the Hitler-Stalin pact of 50 years before and the subsequent incorporation of the three Baltic States into the USSR.

Gorbachov and his supporters originally welcomed the political ferment in the Baltic States as a step toward democratic life in

the Soviet Union. But the Balts' demand to leave the Soviet Union altogether are felt as a threat to the whole process.

The human chain demonstration, with demands for secession, was followed by an exceptionally strong statement from the Soviet

## SOVIET UNION

Communist Party Central Committee rebuking "nationalist hysteria" and opposing demands by Baltic nationalists to limit the voting rights of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish and White Russian residents and oblige them to speak the local language.

Professor V. thought the Central Committee had overreacted and hoped its alarmism would prove unjustified. The situation was particularly tricky, he noted, because the Baltic States had been essentially agrarian societies whose industry and the working class came mostly from outside, and especially from Russia. The social and national questions are intertwined.

**Universal out of joint:** But right away

the national aspect prevails. This is the perplexing surprise for Gorbachov and the liberal Moscow intellectuals who support his bold policies. Aside from the risk of provoking some sort of crackdown to restore order and save the union, the mounting nationalisms must be disheartening because they deny the core concept of Gorbachov's "new thinking": the supremacy of universal human values.

The priority of universal values over national, class or ideological particularisms is fundamental to Gorbachov's argument in favor of disarmament and international cooperation. Nationalism at home risks undermining the reformists' basic philosophical optimism.

What is left is computer envy, the desperate need to catch up with computerized Western society. Computers and "the market" overlap as techniques to rationalize inefficient Soviet consumer production and make supply correspond to demand. Soviet democratization is not in response to popular demand. It is the response of the intellec-

tual elite to the realization that complex modern systems cannot be controlled and regulated from the top, but can work only through decentralization.

But how do Soviet citizens respond to the new freedom? The hope has been that they would take greater responsibility for their work, for their productive contribution to society. This need for "creative, intense and sustained work" was stressed by Gorbachov in his postvacation television speech.

Individual Soviet citizens may prefer to use their new liberty in very different ways, ways that do not necessarily improve the overall situation. For the tourist arriving in Leningrad, the first sign of greater freedom is the boldness of illegal moneychangers asking to buy hard currency.

It used to be said that travel broadens. It might now be said that tourism narrows, offering only a narrow crack to peer through for fleeting glimpses of a vast and varied land.

The trouble is, a tour is the only way most people can see the Soviet Union. Real travel is too expensive. That is why we went on a cheap French tour, two weeks of everything for the price of the airfare alone.

**The tour box:** The tourist longing to make contact with real people has an identity problem. She/he is no longer herself/himself, but a "tourist." This means a bearer of hard currency. For the host country, the purpose of the tour is to bring in some of that hard currency, and the only reason for local people to approach tourists is to buy hard currency in order to shop in the *beriozhka* stores, where rubles are not accepted. This very fact causes proud citizens to resent tourists and sometimes even to show it.

Still, speaking several languages and a smidgeon of Russian, it is possible from time to time to engage in snatches of simple conversation. There is a wedding party in our third-class hotel, and we are invited to drink to the happy couple. What do the members of the Leningrad wedding party think of Gorbachov? They shake their heads and say, "No good." Why? ask the Gorbiphile Westerners, disappointed. Shortages of soap, sugar, everything. Speculation and corruption are flourishing. Sure, Gorbachov is smart; he's fine for London or Frankfurt. But "the bad people obeyed Brezhnev. They don't follow Gorbachov." The Gorbiphile Westerners protest defensively that one man can't do everything, that it's up to all the citizens to reform the country. "Czar Peter the Great changed Russia all by himself," comes the answer.

Gorbachov's Soviet Union also has an identity problem.

"You must get it out of your heads that we here in the Soviet Union are living in a socialist society," Professor V. tells us didactically. "We are in a pre-socialist, developing country. We realize more and more clearly that socialism can begin only when productive forces reach the level of the most advanced countries. When we say we need a market economy, it's because it's the fastest way of reaching that level."

There is no "real existing socialism," and communism is a distant utopian ideal.

Moscow intellectuals can look ahead to such a distant utopia by way of a complex detour through the Western model, picking up democracy and the market on the way, and perhaps eventually sharing utopian ideals with the West. The Gorbachovian intellectuals are frustrated political people, of a particular generation, who worked up their exceptional political courage through the long period of stagnation. To frustrated polit-



ical people, freedom means freedom to make politics. Is that what it means to the others? Not necessarily.

The French tour was linked not to Intourist but to a smaller agency called Sputnik, meaning fellow traveler, which caters to youth groups. Passing a monument to the Revolution, one of them remarked casually that a lot of people now think Lenin went too far and that it would have been better to stop with the bourgeois revolution.

In the Leningrad museum of the Revolution, Trotsky's picture has been added to the bottom row of a panel of rehabilitated heroes. He has not yet been given a more prominent place because key documents about his role are in the U.S., the guide said, and besides, he was a Menshevik until after Lenin's Bolsheviks captured the Winter Palace. She calls this "the uprising"; the French guide keeps insisting it was a "putsch."

The Sputnik guides seemed indifferent to the French tour leader's stream of cracks about Soviet shortcomings. There were no apologetics. The guides did not seem to care at all what foreigners thought about the Soviet Union, nor were they particularly curious about the West. Their main interest in talking with foreigners was to practice languages that could come in handy in subsequent commercial careers.

**West is best:** The main Soviet interpreter stressed his dislike of Arabs. He was proud of his Armenian descent and assumed from what he had heard that the French didn't like Arabs either. Arabs were touchy about their honor and quarrelsome, he maintained. He had met them at Patrice Lumumba University, which takes in 107 Third World nationalities, none of which he particularly liked. He had pointed to the constructive features of Western "imperialism" in his thesis and was interested in joint ventures with Western agribusiness in the Third World.

The younger generation does not have the pent-up political frustrations of the Gorbachov generation. Their identity problem is tied up with the West. It is not so much that they admire Westerners; I suspect they tend to consider Westerners spoiled and selfish. It is more that they seek recognition of the fact that they too belong to the West.

Odessa is a lovely city with a legendary revolutionary history. We were thrilled at the prospect of an evening of what was supposed to be "conversation with workers from the automobile factory." The workers turned out to be engineering students, nicely dressed young men and women, and any possible conversation was soon rendered impossible by skull-splitting disco music. This is Westernization: vodka has been replaced by disco noise as the vehicle of collective unconsciousness.

You are what you eat, what you wear, what you dance, what you drive. Western consumerism offers a way to construct individual identities that appeals more directly to more imaginations than self-management socialism.

In Moscow, people hang around on the sidewalk in front of *The Moscow News*, talking and arguing with each other. A woman watching asks if I know an American journalist; she is a clairvoyant and wants to confide the future of the world to U.S. mass media. In Leningrad, little groups of men gathered in intense political debate in front of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan. The mood was somewhere between Hyde Park Corner and the main piazza in Bologna.

There is no sign of the fear characteristic of a police state.

Churches are doing a lively business. Worshippers cross themselves fervently at beautifully sung evening Masses in well-tended Orthodox churches. Our Lady of Kazan, however, is still the Museum of Religions and Atheism. A cultivated American woman came looking for the section on the Inquisition. But moralistic condemnation of religion did not seem to be what it was about. The concept of the museum was evolutionary, stressing the progress from primitive cults toward scientific enlightenment. The implicit criticism of religion was simply that its cosmology was all wrong, but the presentation was respectful: fine artifacts illustrating Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism,

**This is a developing, pre-socialist society, the professor said. "Socialism can begin only when productive forces reach the level of the most advanced countries."**

Egyptian and Roman gods. Atheism was stuck in a corner, illustrated by portraits of pioneers of rationalism such as Galileo, Voltaire, Diderot and Feuerbach.

Russia appears to have been less de-Christianized by its Bolshevik revolution than France was by its bourgeois one.

In Kiev, intellectuals are founding the Ukrainian Popular Movement, potentially a greater threat to Soviet stability than the Baltic movements. But this is not for tourists. Other signs of Ukrainian identity are visible in museums and at the opera, however. National identity has been fostered in the USSR, so it is no wonder that it asserts itself when the socialist identity falters. We visit the truly monumental War Museum, with grandiose displays recalling the major battles of "The Great Patriotic War" of 1941-1945. The Soviets rarely speak of "World War II," which began in 1939. The authoritatively feminine guide leads us resolutely through the heroic memorabilia, briskly dismissing the notion that the Germans were defeated by the winter: "It's cold for us too."

In response to questions, she acknowledged that it took Stalin 10 days to respond to Hitler's invasion because he was completely knocked out by the shock. He at first ordered Soviet forces not to fire back (which explains the rapid German advance). Stalin, she said, had eliminated his best officers and signed a pact with the fascists that made no sense. She recalled the "11 million people of all nationalities" who died in Hitler's death camps with no special mention for the Jews.

In Kiev's main street, a Jewish engineer was eager to practice his English in preparation for New York. He'd just as soon emigrate to Belgium, but Belgium doesn't accept immigrants easily and "it's necessary to learn two languages." However, he thinks he can get refugee status in the U.S. In fact, he is a refugee by anticipation. He expects the middle layer of Party leadership to organize in two or three years and overthrow Gorbachov. Then the Jews will probably be persecuted as scapegoats, so it's better to get out while the getting is good.

"Gorbachov can't win on the nationalist

issue," he said. "If he cracks down, he's a dictator. If he doesn't, he's letting the country fall apart and he'll be overthrown."

Nearby Chernobyl was only a secondary reason to leave.

**Who'll stop the rain?** A physicist I met on a Kiev city bus had helped measure the radiation levels after the Chernobyl disaster. "They are extraordinarily uneven. There will be strong radiation in one place, and none at all a short distance away. Rain usually reduces it, but sometimes after a rain there is more." Radiation in Kiev is down to only five times the norm, after reaching a hundred to a thousand times the norm after the disaster. Now the city is all right, but nobody is sure about the countryside—exceptionally rich farmland.

There is plenty of food in Kiev, but people wonder what's in it and what it will do to them.

"Most scientists are not really improving the world," the physicist said with a sad smile. "Nobody really grasps what it's all about. Environmentalists are concerned with little things, improving a neighborhood park, not the big ones."

In Russia itself, the environment is an issue for social movements. Elsewhere, especially in the Baltic States, it tends to become an aspect of nationalist complaints against the Russians, who are blamed for imposing industrialization and its pollution under the guise of progress and development.

Even a tourist can see things to admire in the Soviet Union. The urban transport systems are cheap and excellent. The famous Moscow metro is not too grandiose—why shouldn't marble and statues be put where millions of people pass every day? Instead

of competitive body display, calisthenics are practiced in a way that encourages everyone to exercise. A group of senior citizens was prancing to funny music in the main soccer stadium in Kiev, obviously having a good time. The big cities are well equipped with schools, parks, playgrounds and theaters. There are cars on the streets, but not so many as to cause constant traffic jams and poison the air. There are no homeless people living in the street. Medicine is dirt-cheap.

Alcoholic beverages have largely gone underground. The state has lost tax money as a result. Nobody need suffer from thirst. There are mineral-water-dispensing machines all over. The customer rinses the glass provided (which users do not steal) and then for a kopek (next to nothing) can have a glass of mineral water, or for two kopeks, a glass of mineral water with fruit flavoring. A soft drink, in short, with no bottle, can or plastic cup to throw into the growing heap of trash. This refreshing, environmentally harmless drink costs a fraction of price of a Pepsi-Cola.

What may look to Western green eyes like absence of waste is undoubtedly more widely viewed as a sign of backwardness.

In Moscow, we asked Professor V. what thought was being given to using Western technology without reproducing the harmful aspects of Western society. Reaching the Western level is one thing, we said, but following the Western model is another. The professor acknowledged that the current changes were indeed following the Western model. Eventually, he said, Communists in the Soviet Union would have to face this problem of a different model at the Western level. Will they have the choice? □

# 13

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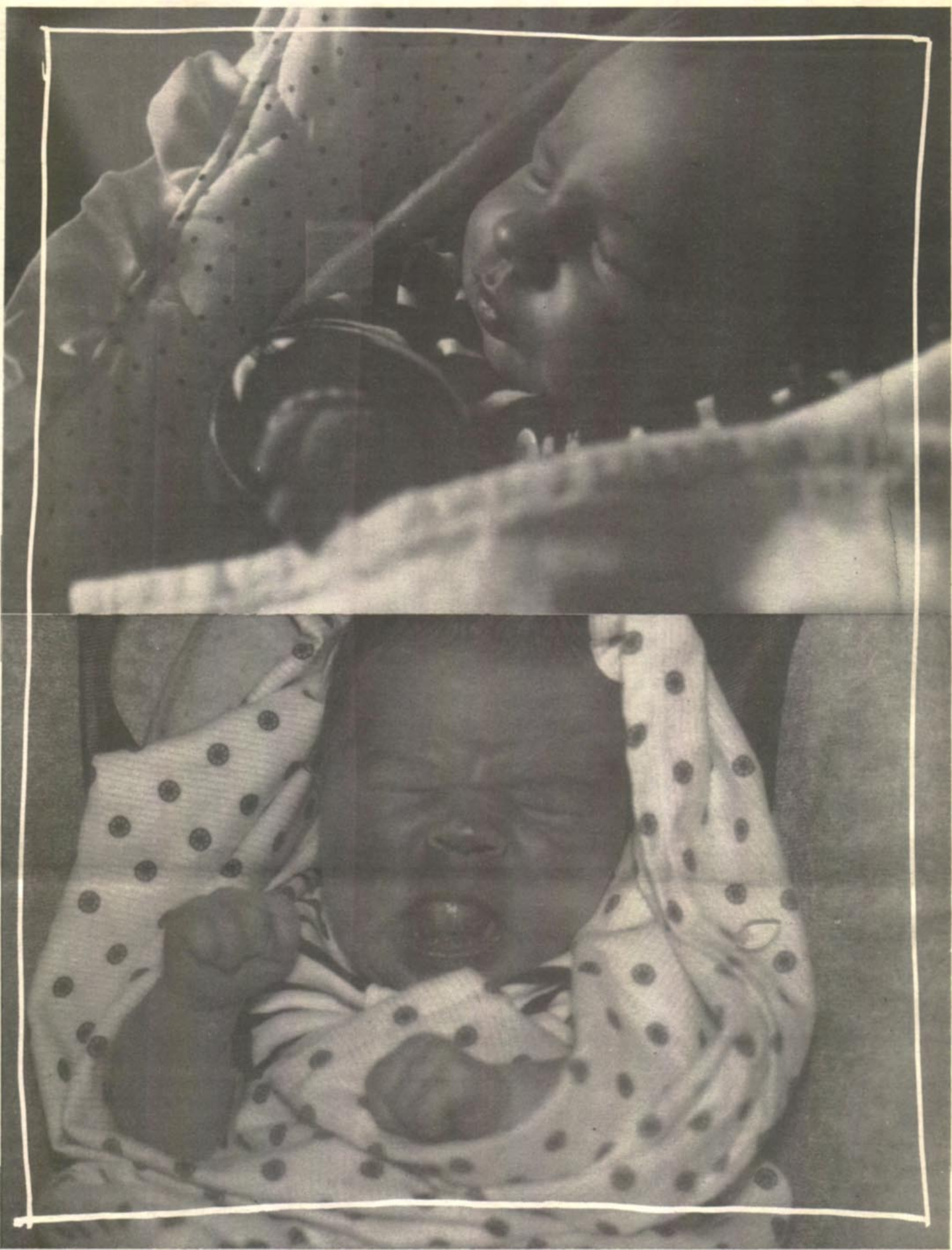
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# TOOTHY

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**T**HIS PAST WINTER I HAD A BABY. That means my thighs look like semideflated Michelins, I've got eyebags like George Shultz and all I'm supposed to be able to talk about is the consistency of infant excrement. It also means I've had to confront, in a more personal and immediate way than before, the soft-focus, honey-hued symbolism surrounding moms and babies. I've had to sit there in my husband's sweatpants (the only thing that fits) and watch the likes of *Good Morning America*'s Joan Lunden chirp on cheerfully at 7:15 a.m., insisting we can do it all.

Nowhere is the gap between image and reality wider than the one separating the smiling, serene, financially comfortable and perfectly coiffed media mom from her frazzled, exhausted,

spit-up-covered, real-life counterpart. Everywhere I turn, as I read child-care books, watch TV or go shopping for baby paraphernalia, I find myself navigating the powerful crosscurrents of prevailing expectations that define middle-class motherhood today.

Shooting these ideological rapids on a daily basis, while also taking care of a baby, can produce a certain astringency in the new mom's world-view. This astringency, however, must get encapsulated in short diatribes that take no more than 12 minutes to write—the longest uninterrupted span most new mothers ever have. What follows are a few such caplets.

**Surreal world:** One of the first things new parents learn is that it's considered gauche to talk too much about the baby. This is especially true for mothers. Baby-talk is supposed to be boring, unserious, not quite legitimate: it means you've lost your critical edge, your connection to the "real world."

Have people ever considered how deeply

sexist this bias is? During the first few months of my daughter's life I was in another dimension, in which clocks and schedules didn't matter and the ordered, the logical, the rational had no place. It was a realm of sensations and instincts and, of course, profound emotions—a realm completely at odds with the way our work, indeed, our entire society, is structured.

Because mothers are the ones who nurse, it is a realm primarily inhabited by women. And yet I was supposed to dismiss this realm, or not admit to its pull, because I am a "professional woman" who was supposed to keep up with Dan Quayle's malapropisms or follow the battle over whether a corrupt, horny millionaire dwarf with an alcohol problem and the worst haircut in America should become secretary of defense. What kind of society tells mothers that the activities of such men are more important than whether their child smiled for the first time?

**L.A. flaw:** In the early months I watched more TV than usual, often at odd hours, while feeding my daughter. But even the TV shows I watched



# Susan J. Douglas

for escapism let me down. On *L.A. Law* this past season Ann Kelsey and Stuart Markowitz, who had been trying unsuccessfully to have a baby, adopted an infant girl. The only difference this baby seemed to make in their lives was that they struggled to find the right mobiles and nanny.

In one episode Ann had to bring the baby to work, and the baby lay in her bassinet while Ann took a deposition. Although the point of the scene was to show how the baby's crying ruined the deposition, I still watched completely incredulous.

Where were Ann's eyebags? How could she have the presence of mind to do anything, let alone concentrate on legal work, if she has an infant who's disrupted her sleep several times the night before? Why were there no unsightly milk splashes on the padded shoulders of her \$700 outfit? When we see Ann and Stuart at home with the baby, they are ecstatically rocking a quietly cooing baby who apparently never cries, defecates or throws up, and who doesn't have the audacity to wreak havoc with her parent's schedules or relationship.

Motherhood has virtually no impact on this woman's life or work, while those of us sitting at home in our sputum-covered bathrobes and ratty slippers are wondering how we're going to survive the next day at work on no sleep. This baby, like most media babies, is a trouble-free, ecstasy-producing, attractive little acquisition; if you "get" one, it will make you feel real good. Now, while babies are an indescribable joy, caring for them makes you feel like you've been tortured in an especially sadistic sleep-deprivation experiment. The feel-good images are a complete lie.

But worse than this, these images of children as cute little items that you "get," and that make you look good in a rocking chair, contribute to the commodification of children that has infected our culture. The idea that children are items that can be acquired, or recalled, without much disruption to one's career is further reinforced on *L.A. Law* when the biological mother of Ann and Stuart's adopted baby changes her mind and successfully sues for custody.

There are a few scenes where Ann asks, "How are we going to survive this?" but immediately after the judge's decision, Ann is back at work, thanking everyone for their help. She goes on with her career as if nothing happened. Most women I know would be destroyed by such an ordeal. But not our Ann; she's the superwoman none of the rest of us is: tough, resilient, undaunted.

At the same time that this little fantasy world was beaming out from dramatic TV, the concept of the "mommy track" was getting bandied about in the new media. According to this proposal, mothers should be on a separate—and unequal—career track that gives them more flexible hours in exchange for no promotions, no challenging assignments and, therefore, no raises. Talk about getting the bends! On the one hand, we have the TV supermoms, size-six women with perfectly applied makeup who can do anything and apparently don't need sleep. On the other hand, we got a recognition that motherhood might be just a tad demanding,

but acknowledged in the dreaded blame-the-victim solution of the mommy track. Between these two extremes are the real mothers of America with no place to stand.

We're either supposed to act as if children don't hamper our ability to be overachieving workaholics and that we can do everything we did before plus raise a baby, or we're supposed to acquiesce to second-class citizenship, acknowledging that being a mother is so debilitating that we're only capable of holding dead-end, place-holding jobs while men (including fathers) and women without kids step on our backs to get the next promotion.

Either way, the real life mother is humiliated, especially if she has a job (rather than a "career") in which the whole notion of advancement or a "track" is absurd. Meanwhile, there is no recognition that fatherhood might be exhausting too, and that new fathers are also operating under a completely different set of circumstances.

In both the supermom fantasies of TV, and

For one new  
mom, it may  
not be the  
revolution, but  
it is a  
revelation.

the mommy track proposals of corporate America, what remains legitimized, even enshrined, is our country's craven, hypercompetitive yuppie work ethic. Babies and parents are supposed to work around these increasingly preposterous norms of what constitutes adequate job performance.

Since one aspect of motherhood, breastfeeding, is still a taboo topic except in publications such as *New Mother*, I won't offend readers by dwelling on this delicate subject. I just have one thing to say. If God really were a woman, men would have breasts too. Do you know how many problems this would solve? Men could help out with the feedings, and new mothers could sleep for more than two hours at a stretch. There would have to be paternity leaves. And there wouldn't be such a desperate demand for *Playboy* or *Penthouse*.

**Crying shame:** Have you noticed that when TV news shows want to really dramatize a social problem they use crying babies? Crying babies signify the drug problem (babies born addicted to cocaine); they signify the tragedy of AIDS (babies born with AIDS); they have become synonymous with famine in Africa and elsewhere. Crying babies are used time and again to sensationalize stories. The bawling infant has come to represent not just innocence, but victimhood, and the babies' cries become the surrogates for our own sense of outrage and frustration.

I think it's sick to constantly use crying babies to signify real blights that primarily affect adults.

The innocent babies stand in stark contrast to afflicted adults, who, according to this media juxtaposition, supposedly deserve what they've gotten. Also, the baby as symbol prompts the audience to see the mother as the real villain; it is women who are reproducing these blights. Now, as someone who denied herself her daily six-pack and ate Switzerland's entire 1988 output of Meuslix during her pregnancy, I'm not going to defend women who use drugs during their pregnancy. But who are the real villains and victims here? Who's getting rich off of crack—young mothers?

The cheap emotionality of using crying babies to signify extremely complex social and economic tragedies plays on misogyny and class and racial biases, while encouraging simplistic thinking. (There are the babies crying; if we just picked them up, gave them a bottle, cuddled them and sterilized their mothers it would all be better.)

Meanwhile, back in your own comfortable home, when your recently fed, changed and cuddled baby starts crying, her wailing resonates with images of deadly diseases, lethal drugs, child abuse and general social decay, which hardly makes it any easier to let her cry when she needs to.

**Toys-mar-us:** When you become a parent, a new abyss of consumerism opens. As with other areas of buying, this one provides great pleasure mixed with equal doses of horror. Stores like Toys-R-Us that you never dared enter before, or eyed with smug derision, now become part of your routine, as you seek to find some happy little playthings between the toy Uzis, Let's-Play-Contra outfits and Donald Trump's "The Game."

One thing you quickly notice is the way that sexism and violence are avidly reinforced for the children of the "lower classes," and determinedly eschewed for upper-middle-class kids. Upscale department stores specialize in unisex clothes made out of 100 percent cotton; trendy mail-order catalogues offer top-of-the-line over-engineered car seats and kiddie backpacks, as well as educational and safe toys.

But a trip to K mart exposes you to a distinctly different line of goods. The polyester clothes (which often produce rashes on babies) are highly gendered. The girls' outfits (in pink, of course) read "Future Miss America" and "Daddy's Little Girl."

The backpacks for sale to this clientele are not only cheaper than those in the catalogues, but they are less safe, lacking the various straps, harnesses and support bars provided to the professional classes. And you won't find the science, geography or conceptual playthings here: this is the land of Barbie and G.I. Joe. A child whose mother must shop at K mart begins his or her life adorned in clothes laden with class and gender codes, reliant on inferior baby technology and surrounded by toys that train little girls to be sex objects and little boys to be cannon fodder.

**Enlightenment in the dark:** At 4:00 a.m., when it seemed like everyone in the world except my daughter and I was sleeping, I felt myself part of that transhistorical and transcultural group called mothers, who get up no matter what, listening to the soft snorings of others, while tending to the needs of a child.

Now this may sound overly romantic or sen-

timental, but I didn't expect to feel such a powerful bond with other women across space and time. And I became incredibly sad that the rift between feminism and motherhood ever occurred and still continues. For if anything makes you feel tied to other women, and sensitive to the ways in which patriarchy can make everyday life for women of all classes and races exceedingly difficult, it is motherhood. Motherhood should be one of the basic foundations of feminism, period.

**Motherhood classes:** So where does all this leave me? Like other feminists, I think mothers have to become more politicized, even though we have little spare time. Bush's daycare proposals are an elitist insult and we should not tolerate them, especially when in the next breath this dunderhead is talking about going to Mars. If we can bail out the savings and loan industry, why can't we have federally supported child care, better maternity leaves and paternity leaves? How about a new labor movement to fight for a four-day workweek? And how about telling Joan Lunden and those other self-satisfied celebrity moms—with their gazillion-dollar contracts, personal hairdressers and battalions of nannies—to shut up already about motherhood?

What is most obvious about all these reflections is that they are a luxury I can afford because I am employed, middle class, white and married. But what do I know about being a working-class mother on the night shift, a single mother with no job, a black mother with no reliable daycare, a poor mother who can't adequately feed or clothe her kids? The answer is, precious little. Time and again my husband and I have been struck by the cushy privilege of our position: we are not rich, but we have health insurance, a pediatrician around the corner, child-care centers where we work and, for now anyway, two incomes.

I'm constantly humbled by this good fortune. And I'm haunted by the class and racial divisions that undermined the women's movement in the early '70s and still continue to do so today.

How do middle-class mothers, without seeming patronizing, arrogant or invasive, help their less privileged sisters have the same decent circumstances within which to raise their kids? This is a crucial question for the '90s that no one, parent or not, can afford to ignore much longer. The problem is that the media's soft-focus imagery of middle-class mom-dom encourages us to regard motherhood through solipsistic and narcissistic eyes, and never to think that the nursery is the proper place for politics. But it is in and around the nursery that a new feminist politics must be born. ■

**Susan J. Douglas** is super and she is a mom, but she has no aspirations of being a supermom.



# EDITORIAL



## SIMULATION.

### Let's end the media and politicians' cruel crusade against drugs

A few days after President Bush announced his new drug war, William J. Bennett, his drug policy director, admitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee that in addition to the \$7.9 billion in federal money already called for in the Bush plan, the cost of new state prisons next year will "certainly" be another \$5 billion to \$10 billion. If built, these prisons will also almost certainly be filled—mostly with young blacks, Hispanics and poor white youth for whom selling drugs is the only way to realize the American dream they see on TV day and night.

And what will happen then? With these tens of thousands of drug pushers behind bars, will drug selling stop? Or will the foot soldiers of the drug army, put away by the administration's warriors, simply

be replaced by new recruits? And if they are replaced by new recruits, will Bennett then call for spending another \$5 billion to \$10 billion in 1991 to put them away, in turn, only to have them replaced by another wave of new recruits?

**Media madness:** The commercial media rant and rave about drugs, posturing politicians act tough on the evening news and—surprise—the polls show the people deeply concerned. That, in turn, causes the media to cash in even more on popular anxiety, and thereby to increase it. But none of this does anything effective to reduce either the need for drugs or the effective supply. Even if cocaine production and transportation is cut back—an iffy proposition at best—it will only be replaced by something else, just as cocaine replaced marijuana when the Carter and Reagan administrations cracked down on it.

Isn't it time to stop the bluster and posturing and to take a serious look at the problem as the social problem it is? Shouldn't our responsible political leaders cool it? We need some quiet time in which a rational approach could be discussed and a plan formulated to use the vast resources—now being thrown into yet another losing war—for a more constructive purpose.

### Even the military now concedes the myth of of the Soviet menace

In a little-noticed assessment, mandated by the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. offers official, if muted, confirmation of much that we have been saying for years about the alleged military threat posed by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact to the United States and NATO. The two most striking conclusions drawn by the Joint Chiefs flatly contradict the rationale of American military policy during the Cold War, and especially during the escalated buildup of military strength during most of the Reagan administration. The first of these conclusions has been the basis of the peace movement's calls for nuclear disarmament for decades. It is that "neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union would be able to win a massive nuclear exchange." Today, the Joint Chiefs say, "the devastation possible from a U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange is well recognized by the leadership of both countries, which is a significant deterrent in itself." They, of course, do not draw the same lesson from this as SANE/Freeze does, but neither do they now talk about preparing to win a nuclear war.

The Joint Chiefs' other conclusion goes even further toward undermining the military buildup rationale. It is that "the primary Soviet concern ... is the security and integrity of the Soviet homeland," and that "since the late '40s the Soviets have demonstrated hesitancy to use military power to achieve their foreign policy goals," the most important of which has been "maintaining dominance over the land and sea areas adjacent to [their] borders," especially in Eastern Europe.

**Telling truths:** Having conceded that both sides have as their highest priority the avoidance of nuclear war, the Joint Chiefs turn to the prospect of conventional warfare in Europe. Here the Joint Chiefs inadvertently make their most telling admission, that there is little or no threat from the Soviets. In the event of a war in Central Europe, Crowe writes, "the Soviets generally assess a NATO-Warsaw Pact war as likely to escalate to the nuclear level." This assessment, Crowe concludes, "appears to be driven in large part by Soviet expectation that NATO is highly likely to resort to nuclear weapons to avoid the defeat of its forces on the Continent." But Crowe ignores the obvious implication that this gives the Soviets a strong motivation to avoid conventional war in Europe. For if they win on the ground, it will only lead to the nuclear war that they want to avoid at all costs.

Beyond that, Crowe hints at the most obvious weakness in the argument about the Warsaw Pact's greater conventional strength. His assessment of forces places them about equal. But he points out that Western forces "derive substantial warfighting advantage through maintenance of superior levels of morale, leadership and training." And he hints at the greatest Soviet weakness: the unreliability of its allies' forces, especially in an offensive war. In fact, the fatal flaw in the Joint Chiefs' assessment is that it considers the Warsaw Pact forces as a unified opponent of NATO. That's what enables Crowe to consider them equal. But while that might be true if the East were to fight a defensive war, it is patently absurd if they are thought of as aggressors. One need only look at the most recent developments in Poland and Hungary to see that this is so.

The Joint Chiefs, of course, do not conclude that since neither side wants nuclear war and since the Soviets offer no threat of aggression in Europe, we should cut back drastically on armaments. They are, after all, true welfare queens. But Crowe's amazingly honest assessment surely provides a most respectable basis for such cutbacks. It's time Congress took the hint.

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# LETTERS

## Socialism as social control

**Y**OUR EDITORIAL, "COMMUNISM'S CRISIS, SOCIALISM'S OPPORTUNITY" (JTT, Aug. 30) makes the point that the reform process in the Soviet Union and in some of the Central European countries is not a vindication of capitalism. Though this is certainly the case, the editorial does not help overcome socialism's own crisis—the inability to identify what, in today's world, socialism means.

In any future economy, a mix of market and plan will have to be employed since each has advantages and costs associated with its use. Markets gain efficiency and growth for society, but they produce inequality and unemployment. Parts of the economy that are planned can achieve equality and predictability but, in all likelihood, with accompanying lagging productivity.

The combination of plan and market that is chosen is fundamentally important in shaping any future society. There is, however, no technically correct answer to the issue of how much of each should be used. That decision is strictly a consequence of the preferences of the decision-makers.

I suggest that the word "socialism" be reserved for societies in which the choice of the mix of market and plan is subject to democratic decision-making. In this way "socialism" would refer to the social control of the direction of the economy and society. In socialism, popular democracy would command the economy rather than the reverse, as presently prevails in both corporate capitalism and the planned economies.

Jay R. Mandle  
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

## Real ideas, please

**T**HE ISSUE OF NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE Arts (NEA) funding is more complex than artists contend in their reactions to the recent congressional action (JTT, Aug. 2).

Let me relay the story of our community college art gallery. It is located in the library because the library is open and staffed longer than other areas of the campus, allowing the art department a display area without the expense and trouble of separate staff.

A year ago last spring I glanced at the photography exhibit being mounted, declared it was "racist and sexist" and objected to it being in the library where I and other women have to work. The photography was of excellent quality. The photographer is African-American. Several striking portraits of local African-American men whose names graced their pictures were interspersed with nudes of an anonymous Caucasian woman displaying her well-developed muscles. The arrangement that prompted my reaction was of two African-American men, one looking left and the other right, on either side of the woman, who sat with legs spread wide in a provocative and aggressive pose.

My objections were called "censorship." During the month the exhibit remained in place, I would look up from the reference desk to see a Caucasian man standing with his nose in the photographed woman's crotch, or children standing below the photo gawking, or an African-American male stu-

dent pointing to the photo laughing and whispering while his girlfriend said aloud, "You're dirty"; or a group of laughing African-American athletes wandering by and giving the photo a flick of the hand to set it swaying.

The photographer coyly declared that the model was wanting only a "record of her muscular development as her weightlifting training proceeded," not even acknowledging any meaning to his exhibit.

Subsequent exhibits of paintings and drawings in the gallery included four-foot-square oils of a naked woman's butt, whose only artistic merit was accurate depiction; five-foot-square turkey carcasses; and line drawings of buildings so dull one could only wonder incredulously how draftsmanship had gotten elevated to "art." To all these I remained silent, having no wish to expend more energy or judgment and be labeled "censor."

Then, this spring, a marvelous thing happened. The art department looked to the city arts commission for funding for its gallery. The chairman of the commission, having seen the carcasses and then the lines, said bluntly that if the persons responsible for choosing the exhibits wanted financial support, they would have to demonstrate an improved quality in their selectivity.

Not surprisingly, no one heard the word "censor" applied to this woman of discriminating taste.

In short, who provides the money does get to have some say in how the money is spent.

I recoil, knowing the horrors suffered by Mandelstam, Solzhenitsyn and Ratushinskaya, for example, to hear comparisons to totalitarian governments just because public funds are being cut off for certain exhibits that, in truth, sound vulgar. But who is to decide how government funds should be distributed among artists and institutions? That is the question, and leaping to the front with cries of "censorship" will not solve anything.

Perhaps NEA funds, rather than being used for the support of individual artists, could be distributed to high schools for art programs. In Seattle, arts programs were cut back and teachers laid off last year, provoking bewildered, hurt and angry demonstrations from high school students who had valued their excellent music and drama instructors. A cogent University of Washington reporter pointed out the Catch-22 that has been created by a new university admission requirement of some arts courses in high school and the simultaneous elimination of local high schools' arts programs.

Public funds are needed to support the arts, but how should merit be judged and

what is the best use of the allocated monies? I would like to see more real ideas put forth, and fewer mere reactions.

Kate Bradley  
Redmond, Wash.

## No no-strike clauses

**D**AVID MOBERG'S SPLENDID ARTICLE (JTT, AUG. 30) calls for: 1. Legislative rather than collective bargaining solutions to problems like health care; 2. Changes in federal labor law to protect the rights of workers in non-union shops and of associations or other non-union groups that may represent only a minority of employees; 3. Additional changes in federal labor law to prohibit the hiring of permanent replacements during strikes and, perhaps, to trade off the union shop and dues checkoff for "unlimited rights for secondary boycotts, sympathy strikes and other acts of solidarity"; 4. A broad conception of industrial democracy that would give workers a voice in investment decisions; and 5. Establishment of worker safety committees in all workplaces, whether unionized or not.

To these important proposals I would like to add one more.

Moberg's article praises the militant direct action of the Pittston miners and their allies under the leadership of United Mine Workers (UMW) President Richard Trumka. However, it appears that at least some Pittston miners are disappointed that the UMW and Trumka have not continued the sympathy strikes that swept the coal fields in June and July, especially after Trumka's statement of early July that he was willing to go to jail. Moreover, the AFL-CIO has instructed its state federations and central labor councils that they should not engage in actions that "conflict with the legal obligations imposed by the court on the UMW or by existing labor agreements with AFL-CIO affiliates."

I think that indicates that even the best national union leaders (like Trumka) are not going to support all-out direct action by the rank and file so long as unions have contracts that contain no-strike clauses.

I suggest that any candidate for national union office who seeks our support be asked to make a commitment that he or she will not negotiate or approve any contract containing a no-strike clause. Three points about this proposal:

1. This is not a proposal that requires a change in national labor law. There are no-strike clauses in contracts because unions agreed to them, not because the law requires it.

2. This proposal is a logical extension of the strategy of "running the plant back-

ward," that is, letting the contract with its no-strike clause expire and engaging in direct action under the protection of Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act;

3. This proposal would not necessarily lead to more strikes. There are situations where the rank and file's interest is to stay in the plant, and it is higher leaders who start or prolong a strike. The point of principle is not to have more strikes, but that control over the decision whether or not to use the strike weapon—during the life of the contract as well as when the contract expires—must be put back into the hands of the rank and file. Workers won't strike unless they feel very strongly.

I would be interested to know what readers think about this idea.

Staughton Lynd  
Niles, Ohio

## Spread it on the ground

**R**OD BENSON'S "LEARNING TO USE FEWER CHEMICALS on the Farm" (JTT, Aug. 2) rightly points out that sustainable agriculture could bring together "farmers trying to make a living" and "consumers wanting safe food"—as well as environmentalists who seek to reduce contamination of water and soil by the overuse of agricultural chemicals.

At one point Benson uses the phrase "low-input sustainable agriculture"; later the term "less-intensive agriculture" comes up. If "low input" means low in fossil-fuel-based chemicals, if "less intensive" means less reliant on non-renewable synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, then both terms make limited sense.

But we need to understand that sustainable agriculture may be very intensive and very high-input in other ways. If a farmer, instead of spraying poisons, tills his field frequently to keep down weeds, then he may have low or no input of herbicides, but he could have a rather high input of fuel to run the tractor.

If a farmer, instead of simply pouring on ammonia-based nitrogen fertilizer to grow his wheat or corn, enriches his soil with manure from a herd of livestock, then he may have low input of chemical fertilizer and a low input of money to buy the chemical, but a high input of manure and a high input of his own labor. He must move the animals to spread the manure, feed the animals to produce the manure, and so on. Thus, "less intensive" chemical use almost always means "more intensive"—or at least, more attentive—management of the land.

Wilbur Wood  
Roundup, Mont.

## SYLVIA



**SAINT Lu-Ann**  
PATRON SAINT OF LIBRAS  
AND CONTRACTORS. ST.  
LU-ANN WAS PELTED  
TO DEATH WITH TINY  
PIECES OF INSULATION  
AFTER PROMISING TO  
FINISH REMODELING  
JOBS FOR SEVEN  
PEOPLE IN ONE WEEK.  
ST. LU-ANN'S MOTTO:



"I JUST WANT EVERY-  
ONE TO BE HAPPY, I  
THINK." CELEBRATE  
HER DAY OCTOBER 1  
AT TWILIGHT IN A  
GONDOLA. Sing some-  
thing romantic,  
WEAR HYDRANGEAS.



By James Petras

**T**HE MOST STRIKING ASPECT OF U.S.-Soviet relations in the '80s is the one-sided concessions ceded by the Soviets and the lack of reciprocity from Washington. The Gorbachov period has been characterized by withdrawal of influence from major regions of world politics, cooperation with the U.S. in reasserting the latter's influence in conflictual regions and pressure on allies to accommodate U.S. interests; even where the consequences will result in changes inimical to long-term Soviet security interests. The consequence has been a novel historical moment in two senses: first, the U.S.—itself a declining power—is able to reassert a global role, even as its capacity and resources to do so are declining; second, the Gorbachov regime is voluntarily relinquishing power and setting in motion forces that can have a lasting effect in undermining Soviet influence in multiple regions of the world. The scale and scope of the shifts in power thus are not mere "tactical adjustments"—isolated moves or temporary retreats in particularly inhospitable regions—but across-the-board changes in which the Soviet leadership apparently perceives a reduced role for the Soviet regime in world politics and a shift in priority from international political-economic issues toward internal economic-commercial issues.

**Tyranny's opportunity:** The result of Soviet changes has been to lessen competition and reduce the options and bargain-

## Soviet 'give' is being met by American 'take'

ing power of Third World countries. Giving Washington a free hand in the Third World might reduce the probability of a Soviet-type regime emerging, but it will not necessarily produce more stable, prosperous and democratic societies. On the contrary, the results could be the return of totalitarian collectivists in Cambodia, fanatical religious fundamentalists in Afghanistan, terrorist clients of South Africa in Angola and Mozambique and a virulent, destabilizing elite political opposition in Nicaragua. Soviet-U.S. summitry may secure Gorbachov a good press and high public opinion ratings, but his policies have not produced any reciprocal concessions from the West that could lead to peace and justice in the troubled areas of the world. On the contrary, each Gorbachovian concession has been interpreted by most policy-makers, their academic advisers and the mass media as signs of weakness and have prodded the U.S. government to push for further concessions, particularly those undermining political and social movements for national liberation and social transformation. Pro-Western Soviet intellectuals and policy-makers who have taken as their model for Soviet society a utopian and sanitized version of Western society and development have been unspoken allies of this cumulation of Western power.

Ultimately, the Soviet policy of building bridges to the advanced capitalist countries and burning bridges to the Third World can be counterproductive, particularly if it turns out that the Soviets are unable to obtain the resources they need from the West and have lost their political and diplomatic influence elsewhere.

**Balance sheet of non-reciprocity:** U.S.-Soviet regional settlement, hailed in the West as a new breakthrough in U.S.-Soviet relations, have not led to mutual disengagement. Instead, Soviet or allied withdrawals have been accompanied by increased involvement of the U.S. In place of negotiated changes, the unilateral Soviet decisions have encouraged Western ideologues to pursue military victory.

The case of Afghanistan is an outstanding example of Soviet withdrawal and the escalation of U.S. military support to the Afghan tribalists and Islamic fundamentalists. While the Soviets, following the terms of the negotiations, withdrew, the Pakistani regime continues to offer major logistical support and provide military planning to the Afghan opposition. Soviet proposals of a negotiated power-sharing settlement have been rejected, and Washington has supported Afghanistan rebel claims for an unconditional military surrender.

In Central Europe, the Soviets have proposed and are in the process of reducing conventional military and nuclear forces, while Washington, Paris and London insist on retaining their numbers while upgrading (modernizing) their short- and mid-range nuclear missiles. No counteroffer of substance has been put on the table. The Soviets' unilateral initiatives have merely stimulated demands for deeper cuts. Even

more to the point, in Western eyes the Soviet arms reduction proposals are not considered part of East-West relations, but rather simply an outgrowth of internal Soviet economic weaknesses. The implication is that since the West does not suffer from these internal debilities, it does not need to follow suit.

In Africa, the Soviets have utilized their aid and advisory program—as well as their leverage in Cuba—to pressure the Angolan government to negotiate with the U.S.- and South African-backed UNITA insurgency. While Cuban troops withdraw from Angola, Washington and South Africa have continued to arm and support Jonas Savimbi. As a result, the number of armed incursions and civilian casualties suffered by the Angolan government have increased since the U.S.-brokered cease-fire. The tactic in both cases has been for Washington to pursue a two-track policy with a double discourse. On the one hand, to orchestrate summit meetings that propose diplomatic-political solutions, thus hoping to disarm its adversaries and project a reasonable conciliatory image to international public opinion. On the other, to sustain military support to clients for their attempts to conquer territory, bargaining power or total control.

A similar process is evident in southeast Asia, where the convergence of U.S., French, Chinese and Soviet policy has forced the Vietnamese to withdraw their troops from Cambodia, opening the door for a possible new takeover by the strongest military force in the opposition, the Khmer Rouge. As an anti-Vietnamese counter, Pol Pot figures in Washington's policies to destabilize the Indo-Chinese peninsula and to regain more leverage in defining Vietnam's terms of re-entry into the regional economic system. Once again, the unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese troops has been accompanied by increased, large-scale advances and assaults by the Khmer Rouge into areas previously defended by the Vietnamese.

While the Soviet Union has moved toward accepting ideological pluralism and the coexistence of different social systems in its former sphere of influence, most notably in its warm support of the clerical pro-capitalist regime in Poland, the U.S. has given no signs that it would modify its relations with socialist Cuba or even the nationalist market-based Nicaraguan regime. Even further, Washington is moving in Panama to reassert its influence over the Panama Canal, reversing early agreements by overthrowing the Noriega dictatorship and promoting a civilian client regime. The military maneuvers and incidents, the threats to kidnap their dissident ex-client are reminiscent of the tactics Leonid Brezhnev used to preserve Soviet regional domination. Once again, Washington encourages "openness" in Eastern Europe while practicing ideological closeness in the Western hemisphere. The logic of this apparent paradox is that Washington is interested not in openness but in maximizing power, and the former is promoted or discarded, depending on whether it serves those ends. We

can expect that once the Soviets pull out, Washington and its Western allies will push in. And the same closeness that Washington practices in the Caribbean and Central America will become the rule of the day.

In the Middle East, a similar pattern emerges. While the Soviets do yeoman's work pressuring Iran and Syria to accommodate U.S. interests on the hostages and to become partners to a regional settlement, the U.S. refuses to intervene and pressure the Israelis to release thousands of Palestinian political prisoners held in detention without trial. The Bush politics on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are based on the notion that the most effective manner to secure additional concessions from the Soviets is to "stonewall" it: dig in your heels and keep prodding the Soviets to extract more and more "compromises" from Arafat, until all that will remain is a Palestinian client regime of Israel. The Soviets have apparently accepted Israeli dominance and have made overtures to reopen diplomatic relations and promote economic ties. It appears that the Gorbachov leadership is content to work within the hegemonic framework of the U.S. and to accept U.S. leadership in defining its policy objectives.

**Free hand in the South:** Asymmetrical changes are also visible in the area of Soviet and U.S. responses to electoral processes in contested areas. While the Soviets allowed the Poles to run their own elections, Washington intervenes with massive flows of money, propaganda and organizational resources to subvert the electoral chances of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The sustained economic war and shrill propaganda campaign that Washington mounts against Nicaragua belie the notion that the end of the Cold War has the same meaning in the South as it has in the East. On the contrary, the decline of the Cold War means a free hand for the West to reshape the Third World political economies according to their needs—a position that Fidel Castro has noted in several of his recent speeches.

One of the major consequences of the unequal outcomes in U.S.-Soviet negotiations has been to create in Washington a feeling that it can act with impunity against the Third World, disregarding the effects of a Soviet counterresponse. The era of the "free hand" opens the door to brazen violations of sovereignty. While U.S.-Soviet agreements may end the Cold War, they seem to encourage Washington to pursue hot wars through surrogates in the Third World.

It is a one-sided "new era" in which Washington hopes for the restoration of capitalist hegemony in Eastern Europe. Eastern intellectuals play a crucial transitional role: by discrediting public enterprises and conveniently refraining from examining the negative experiences of the free market (in Latin America, Thatcherite England and in the cities of the U.S.), they are preparing the ground for a future subordination of their nations to the unfree markets of the international banks and multinationals, a corporate controlled free media and a highly polarized pluralist class society forced into unending debt payments to the West. The end result of non-reciprocal reforms and concessions thus could reduce the chances of nuclear war, but it is hardly likely to be a more just and peaceful world.

**James Petras** teaches sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

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By Michael Bettencourt

**T**HE MISSOURI STATUTE THAT THE Supreme Court let stand in *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services* declared in its preamble that life, and therefore personhood, began at "conception." While the statement appears to create a hard-and-fast medical benchmark, "conception" can mean several things.

Conception can mean fertilization, except fertilization can't be detected until the egg is implanted on the wall of the uterus. But while implantation can be detected hormonally, the egg can still "twin" in the early stages of implantation, so that if individuality is a key element of being a person, then one would have to wait about four weeks after the last menstrual period before saying that conception has occurred.

Some authorities believe conception has taken place when there is evidence of any of the following in the fetus: awareness of or responsiveness to outside stimuli, spontaneous muscular movement or a positive electroencephalogram (EEG)—all of which place "conception" still further along. So, if conception cannot be clearly defined, neither can the "personness" of the fetus—which hinges on conception—be indisputably demonstrated.

Like many arguments proposed by anti-abortionists, the "life begins at conception" argument does not draw a clear line. But anti-abortion proponents offer three others: appearance, ability to feel pain and potential.

**Personhood:** "Person is often made synonymous with 'human being,' but a person is clearly more than simply a collection of cells created by 46 chromosomes (which is what a 'human being' is). Often people on life-support systems are referred to as 'vegetables.' Clearly, while they *appear* to be human, having all the features and form of a human being, something is missing, something that might be called 'consciousness.'

While "consciousness" is difficult to define, its absence strikes us forcefully: the person has lost the ability to see the world and communicate about it and know what his or her place is in the scheme of things. Being a person involves having both consciousness (appraising the world in which one lives) and self-consciousness (appraising oneself).

Awareness in this sense is not an automatic part of our genetic heritage. We have capabilities but are not finished products. Awareness must be earned in negotiation with the world, and this requires time for development, tension and thought. People are different persons throughout their lives, for each of our ages calls forth a different response. A person is a cumulative process, not something that is transmitted with the genes.

Anti-abortionists often avoid the topic of awareness, saying that the fetus is a person because it looks like a person (as a tactic, they will show pictures of aborted human fetuses that, not surprisingly, look human) and it can feel pain (and supposedly a number of other things as well). Mildred Faye Jefferson, an ardent pro-lifer, once said that "visuality equals truth."

But the fact that the fetus looks like a person does not make it a person. Many

## Case for fetal personhood a dubious conception

animals with which humans are in contact have human-style responses and appearances, yet that does not make them persons and no one would argue that they were persons.

The appearance argument is not really an argument at all. Instead, it's a strong emotional identification with the fetus; the fetus can't reciprocate because it lacks the awareness to do so. Because the fetus looks like the people who are looking at the fetus, the fetus must therefore be like them. Add to this the strong affections attached to children and what emerges is, as one woman said at an anti-abortion lecture, the conviction that "in one's heart one knows the fetus is a person in the womb."

Thus the argument of the fetus as person, in this line of reasoning, comes down to an assertion that the "heart" (wherever that may be located and however it may work) knows what a person is and can determine personhood. The person who employs this argument is saying that the fetus is a person because he or she wants it to be a person but avoids the essential point of what makes that fetus a person. This is fine as a basis for private belief, but horrible as a basis for public policy, medical practice or law.

Many say that the root of the fetus' "personness" lies in its ability to feel pain, which was the basis for the highly erroneous video *The Silent Scream*. Many organisms feel pain, but feeling pain is not a way to determine what an organism "is." The fact the fetus can feel pain is not an argument for the fetus' personness because these incidents simply indicate that the fetus has a nervous system that feels pain. (In addition, the fetus' sensitivity to pain varies with its age; does that mean personness varies as well?)

We may, as many people do, sympathize with the pain we think the fetus feels, but we must be careful in saying that this sympathy establishes the personness of the fetus. It establishes nothing but our ability to sympathize.

Others try to argue that because the fetus has 46 chromosomes it is a *potential* person and should be treated as such. Often this contention is stated in a highly dramatic way. This particular version comes from Garrett Hardin:

*Two physicians are talking shop. "Doctor," says one, "I'd like your professional opinion. The question is, should the pregnancy have been terminated or not? The father was syphilitic. The mother was tuberculous. They had already had four children: the first was blind, the second died, the third was deaf and dumb and the fourth was tuberculous. The woman was pregnant for the fifth time. As the attending physician, what would you have done?"*

*"I would have terminated the pregnancy."*

*"Then you would have murdered Beethoven."*

This story has two faults. First, it argues that blueprints are the same as the finished product. The expression of traits in a person

is a very subtle balancing act between environment and genes: "who a person is," though dependent on genes, is in no way limited to them. Chromosomes are a necessary but not sufficient basis for personness. Beethoven, born in a different time and place (therefore having different blueprints), may not have become Beethoven. Second, the story could be twisted to say that we should encourage syphilitic and tuberculous couples to have as many children as they could in hopes of getting another Beethoven. This is absurd, but it brings out the emptiness of arguing about the potential person being lost. If Beethoven had been aborted, we would never know what we had lost, for we can't be aware of losing something we never had.

In fact, there are greater losses to mourn in this situation. Beethoven's mother, like most women, started life with about 30,000 immature eggs in her ovaries. She had only seven children. Therefore, 29,993 eggs never achieved personhood. Should we mourn that loss? And as for the father, the 100 million sperm he produced each day of his mature years—some 1 trillion in all—never connected with an egg. Does that constitute a loss in any meaningful sense?

**The numbers game:** In 1974 Garrett Hardin wrote a science fiction tale to illustrate why the fetus shouldn't be considered a person. He posed this situation: a 28th Amendment has been added to the Constitution, an amendment that gives the fetus all the rights to existence enjoyed by an adult. A lawyer is defending a client accused of murder under the 28th Amendment.

The lawyer is giving his final speech to the jury. After he has stated the reasons why his client did what he did, he has a demonstration to make to the court. As preparation, he gives background information on a new process of fertilizing eggs outside the womb so that they could be implanted in the wombs of infertile women. As he is speaking, he withdraws from a carton a flask of milky liquid containing, by his account, 20 trillion fertilized eggs. The flask was given to him by a doctor who specializes in the technique.

The lawyer, to help the court grasp that number, compares it to the number of people who have ever lived on this Earth: 80 billion. The eggs he has in his flask represent 250 times the number of people who have ever inhabited the Earth. He goes on to say that by the 28th Amendment, each of these eggs is a full human being; therefore, he holds in his hand more people than have ever lived.

To make his point about the inadvisability of making the fetus a person, Hardin's lawyer places the flask on the judge's bench and says that he now turns them over to the court. It is the judge's responsibility to see that their lives are maintained. To willfully kill them would be murder; to allow them to die would be manslaughter.

The lawyer goes on to point out that each egg, if placed in a womb, will develop. How many of them could be developed that way? If, as the lawyer calculates, there are 1 bil-

lion women of childbearing age who might donate their wombs, would that be enough? No, because only one out of every 20,000 eggs would have a womb (assuming that the women would be willing to carry the eggs to term). For every egg saved, 19,999 would have to die.

**Dead-end path:** Is there a resolution to this question of the personness of the fetus? No. At least, not if it's stated in the form of "Is the fetus a person or non-person?" A better way to think of the problem is: What are the social, legal, moral and economic consequences of believing one way or another? Looked at this way, considering the fetus a person can only lead to a situation in which the state forces compulsory motherhood on women, citizens become polarized, legal tangles beget legal tangles and the gap between rich and poor becomes wider than it already is. Ironically, declaring the fetus a person would destroy morality and cheapen the already precarious quality of life of many people, precisely the opposite situation envisioned by anti-abortion proponents.

Considering the fetus a person is a dead-end path and is in fact a distraction from the real issue at the heart of the abortion crisis: should women be forced by the state to be mothers, or should they be free to choose motherhood for themselves? Women, not fetuses, are the people we need to pay attention to.

Michael Bettencourt is a freelance writer based in Manchester, N.H.

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## Documenting America, 1935-1943

Edited by Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan  
University of California Press  
361 pp., \$24.95

## Chicago and Downstate: Illinois As Seen by the Farm Security Administration Photographers, 1936-1943

Edited by Robert L. Reid and Larry A. Viskochil  
University of Illinois Press  
194 pp., \$19.95

By Peter Friederici

**I**N 1936 ARTHUR ROTHSTEIN WAS A 21-year-old photographer just finishing his first year on assignment with the photographic division of the Resettlement Administration, a New Deal agency that had been set up to aid poor American farmers. Rothstein's job was to docu-

## PHOTOGRAPHY

ment the hard times faced by Great Plains farmers. Traveling north from the Dust Bowl of Texas and Oklahoma, Rothstein found an assortment of cow skulls scattered in a parched South Dakota pasture. He photographed one, moved it 10 feet and photographed it against another backdrop.

Later that year Rothstein's photos were released to newspapers as graphic evidence of drought. One of his skull pictures made the front page of North Dakota's *Fargo Forum*. Normally this would have been cause for celebration, but the newspaper denounced the photograph as a fake, claiming that Rothstein had been carrying the skull around as a prop. The caption read "A Wooden Nickel," and it implied that other photographs of drought-stricken areas might be just as artificial, might involve just as much manipulation of evocative but fake symbols.

The timing was embarrassing for Rothstein and his boss, Roy Stryker—the photo was published just as President Roosevelt, campaigning for re-election, reached the Dakotas. The incident was used by the anti-New Deal editors of the *Forum* to inveigh against Roosevelt's insistence that more New Deal programs were needed to ameliorate the drought's effects. The controversy received national attention, but—fortunately for Rothstein and Stryker—Roosevelt was re-elected anyway.

**Every picture sells a story:** The story demonstrates the effect one photograph can have, and shows how aesthetic decisions can have political ramifications. Indeed, on the same trip Rothstein took one of the quintessential Depression photos—a shot of a farmer and his two sons crossing a barren field in Cimarron County, Okla., in front of a wooden farm building almost buried in dust. It, along with Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother*,

# Between promotion and emotion



Through a past, starkly: Arthur Rothstein's portrait of Artelia Bendolph (top); Jack Delano's Chicago boy scout waits for the flag dedication ceremony (left); two alternate shots of Dorothea Lange's famous "Migrant Mother" (above).

has become one of the archetypal images of Depression poverty: these visions are what we think of when we think about the '30s.

But we've seen the photographs so often—in newspapers, magazines, textbooks—that it's hard to perceive the subjects as real people. Instead, they've become only types

—the doughty, suffering farmer, the despairing mother. Although the North Dakota editors were unwilling to accept the skull photos as visions of drought, we've learned to accept these photographs as generalized visions of poverty.

A variety of new collections of Farm Security Administration (FSA)

photos have appeared recently. Two of the latest are Carl Fleischhauer and Beverly W. Brannan's *Documenting America, 1935-1943* and Robert L. Reid and Larry A. Viskochil's *Chicago and Downstate: Illinois As Seen by the Farm Security Administration Photographers, 1936-1943*.

The two books address new facets of the FSA's formidable collection of 77,000 prints. *Documenting America* focuses not on individual images—which is how the FSA photographs were most commonly published, in the '30s and more recently—but on "lots" of photographs taken by a single photographer on a single



theme. *Chicago and Downstate* shows us FSA images of Chicago—which were long neglected because it was commonly supposed that the FSA was interested in only rural poverty.

Created within the Resettlement Administration in 1935, the photographic section was later part of the the Farm Security Administration (from 1937 to 1942) before it fell under the aegis of the Office of War Information. Under the direction of Stryker, a former Columbia University economics instructor, the agency's mandate was to record the dismal effects of the Depression on Americans—and the positive results that New Deal programs would (it was hoped) have on those lives. The photographers hired had a contradictory agenda: half documentary, half public relations.

**Framing the photographs:** *Documenting America* begins with two excellent essays by Lawrence W. Levine and Alan Trachtenberg about the different ways that FSA photos have been "read" over the years. The selection here is the closest thing yet to a photographer's-eye view of the collection. There are 15 lots by 12 different photographers, each addressing an individual theme, whether a place or a group of people. This system of organization provides a good idea of the working methods and problems of the FSA photographers.

Most assignments took weeks or months to complete, in part because Stryker exhorted his photographers to familiarize themselves with a region before they ever set out with a camera. But at least one assignment—Walker Evans' "New York City Block"—was the work of only a day. Evans, of all the FSA photographers, was (at that time) the most well known, the most fastidious, the least interested in the political goals of the FSA and the New Deal agencies in general. By viewing a number of his photographs from the same lot—instead of just one or two—we get an idea here of what sort of decisions Evans was making while he was wandering the street that day.

What results is an intimate yet removed portrait of a single block, with Evans clearly distanced from the residents of this working-class neighborhood but sensitive to nuances of human expression and to marks of life outside the neighborhood.

**A modern promotionist:** Other lots are far more evangelizing. Rothstein's "FSA Migratory Labor Camp," for example, documents conditions in a camp set up in Visalia, Calif., to house migrant agricultural workers—this in 1940, when California growers and their lobbyists were leading a bitter fight to defeat such aid for workers. Stryker told Rothstein that the agency needed positive pictures of conditions in the camp, hoping that such photos would swing public opinion in favor of the program. The photographer obliged with glowing images of gardens, a medical clinic, a baseball game, a Saturday-night dance.

Most FSA photographers seem to

have Stryker's faith that the New Deal programs they were promoting would do some good. "We were hoping that the programs were helping the people they were supposed to," the photographer Jack Delano told me recently. "And I think we thought

## FSA photographers had a contradictory agenda: half documentary, half public relations.

that it did help some in forming public opinion."

The emphasis on "positive" images was clearer after the war began in 1941, when Stryker demanded more photographs that would show Americans pulling together. Marjory Collins' "Small Town in Wartime" photo essay here depicts Lititz, Pa., in November of 1942. The town residents buy meat, get haircuts, make bullets and pretzels, sit on the local draft board and are almost Norman Rockwellesque in their self-reliance.

self-assuredness, self-governance.

"We never meet the town drunkard," write Fleischhauer and Brannan in their introduction to this section. They also point out, though, and rightly, that the photos address a broad spectrum of people and activities in the town—and that breadth is what makes these photos interesting for historians and others.

Fleischhauer and Brannan juxtapose the small-town series with Russell Lee's photographs of the relocation of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast in early 1942. As presented here, the series becomes a narrative of this forced move, beginning with Japanese-Americans reading evacuation orders in Los Angeles and ending with a "reception center" consisting of endless rows of identical shacks.

Because there are a number of lots and topics here, one gets the impression that the U.S. of the late '30s and early '40s was above all a diverse society, a place of great ethnic and regional variety. In that respect this book is similar to the travel and history guides issued by the WPA writers' project, which emphasized that the U.S. was too diverse to be easily

summed up.

One positive aspect of the FSA's later emphasis on Americans working together was that photographers began to go out and take pictures of African-Americans, who had been largely neglected by earlier documentary and news reportage. Half the photographs in *Chicago and Downstate* were taken in Chicago, and the majority of those depict life in the "Black Belt," the South Side ghetto area. These photos date from the early '40s, after Stryker—his vision broadening—had begun to focus less exclusively on documenting rural America. Chicago, represented by 1,800 prints in the FSA file, was one of the cities documented most thoroughly by Stryker's photographers.

Many of the photos are bleak scenes of poverty: there are ramshackle tenement buildings, squalid and cramped kitchenette apartments, meager meals. But the photographers didn't just take pictures of what was wrong with urban life. Many of the Black Belt photographs were intended to show that African-Americans were just as upright and responsible as their white

counterparts. There are photographs of African-American professionals and their families; there is even a tender photograph of Oliver Coleman, a musician—and thus supposedly a disreputable individual—at home with his five-month-old son, poring over his scrapbook.

Unfortunately, the depressing conditions these photos document have not improved over the years. Photo captions describe how new migrants from the South came to Chicago and were supported by relief money. However bad living conditions in the city were, they were often better than what the migrants had had in the rural South.

So there are hints of hope here in even the grimmer photographs: there is a vague notion that—through government assistance and the goodwill of those who were better off (such as those viewing the published photographs)—the lives of even the poorest Americans could be improved. That such an optimistic attitude is almost unthinkable today makes these historical photographs a searing indictment. ■

Peter Friederici is a writer living in Chicago.

# C.L.R. James: a one-man gang

## C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary

By Paul Buhle  
Verso, 197 pp., \$13.95

By Eric Lott

It is no mystery. We're making history.

—Linton Kwesi Johnson

LONDON'S 1981 "Brixton" riots unfolded like Allan Bloom's worst nightmare. In April of that year, metropolitan police battled the area's heavily beleaguered Afro-Caribbean residents

## POLITICS

—Prospero muzzling Caliban's curse—as the "disorders" spread first down Atlantic Road, then into Chaucer Road and Spenser Road, up Milton Road, and finally toward the borders of Shakespeare Road itself.

Yet if this street synopsis of empire's decline was the sort of thing to wither a Bloom, it was no less kind to the statist left. Later in the summer, riots continued to sweep through the U.K., finally extending to more than 30 locales. The left was taken wholly by surprise and behaved that way, alternately distancing itself from the rioters and attempting to capitalize on their actions.

**Left holding the bag:** These "July days" constituted an essentially leaderless uprising—"shopping without money," in the words of participants—by working-class kids, black and white, who refused the role of passive victims bereft of a "good job." It could be seen as a grand, spontaneous refusal of the legitimized boredom and irrelevance

urged upon them by labor elites and political advocates. It appeared from all this that Pan-African éminence grise C.L.R. James had had some (invisible) hand in the events, as Tom Ward later remarked in the *Voice Literary Supplement*. Or as James himself once put it: "There is nothing more to organize. ... Organization as we have known it is at an end."

One of the many good things about Paul Buhle's intellectual biography, *C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary*, is that it clarifies the connections between James' ideas and eruptions like Brixton in 1981, Tottenham in 1985 and New York's Tompkins Square Park in 1988, the latest phase (and form) of Anglo-American class struggle. And it helps

trouble the radical pieties that lately constitute leftward cultural thought—the mostly rhetorical invocations of "gender, race and class," and the cynical games of pin-the-sign-on-the-discourse.

James' life and work offer a potential charge to radical thinking on race, the role of culture in mass movements and the interrelatedness of spontaneity and organization in mass political activity. If Buhle's book did little else, it would be crucial in affirming the centrality of a figure who is still curiously marginal to the metropolises, if not to the Third World.

James' life, which began in Trinidad in 1901 and ended near Shakespeare Road in Brixton where he spent his last years, reads like a resume of this century's radical black cultural and political efforts. Coincident with the Harlem Renaissance and the prestige of Jamaican leader Marcus Garvey, James helped organize a circle of Trinidadian writers and cultural thinkers around the

## James' life was a resume of radical black politics.

journals *Trinidad* and *The Beacon*. Leaving for England in 1932, James produced in 1938 his extraordinary version of the black Atlantic originary moment, *The Black Jacobins*: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution—close in spirit to another such enterprise, W.E.B. DuBois' *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935).

**Out of bounds:** During his years of intense political activity in the America of the '40s and early '50s, James was already overseeing at a

Continued on following page



C.L.R. James: overseeing the eruptions of empire.



Continued from preceding page  
distance indigenous anti-colonialist forces in Africa and the Caribbean (Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana and Eric Williams' Trinidad) that would soon flower in the U.S. The '60s witnessed James' superbly genre-blurring *Beyond a Boundary* (1963), that mix of memoir, cultural politics and cricket. It was also an important period of contact with a younger generation of radicals such as historian/activist Walter Rodney (murdered in 1980 by the Forbes Burnham regime in Guyana). By any accounting, James has been one of this century's chief public intellectuals.

Indeed, riffing on Perry Anderson's coinage, "Western Marxism," Buhle shrewdly notes both the absurdity and the partial justice of James' continued exclusion from such a schema: "James can be found outside so-called Western Marxism but not outside either the West or Marxism." James had a far closer relationship to popular political struggles—and mass life generally—than the brilliant but frustrated academics Anderson chronicled.

Like the British New Left a generation later, James saw in the horrors of Stalinism not a reason to retreat to academic or Cold War reservations, but a dire political challenge demanding the most stringent and active critique. James forged an alternative trajectory for the engaged Marxist intellectual: peripatetic, sometimes marginal and sometimes not, as attentive to working-class ethnography as to forms of the state, as beholden to the varieties of mass culture as to Shakespeare.

For though he would spend his life at Caliban's side, James took from Shakespeare and the 19th-century British novel a sense of the extraordinary complexity of human personality and sought to apply that sense to the working-class aesthetic innovations of calypsonians and cricket players. His midcentury journal *Correspondence*, Buhle observes, caught working-class responsiveness to *I Love Lucy*, not to mention the cultural meaning of wildcat strikes, as no other (more celebrated) organs of the left. Hence what Buhle refers to as

James' "dialectical acceptance" of the West's accomplishments as a springboard for other projects that would "transcend the West's palpable limitations."

Marx and Shakespeare, their inextricability and occasional reciprocal cancellation, seemed the very motors of James' world-view. Culturally James believed that "large areas of human existence" had never been accounted for by programs of either the bourgeois or the Marxist variety. In the matter

## Marx and Shakespeare, their inextricability and occasional reciprocal cancellation, seemed the very motors of James' world-view.

of art (a category James refused to discard), reactionaries were as likely to score as radicals; James, for instance, found his friend Paul Robeson's *Othello* stagey and insecure.

On the other hand, James was no aesthete—rather a revisionary Trotskyist, though he shied away from the high-culture Trots around *Partisan Review*. James recognized that cultural forms such as cricket and Shakespeare had been instrumental in bourgeois and imperialist domination, but he saw equally that once in play such forms are readily appropriable.

**A sticky wicket:** More importantly, James held that all art of any worth provides a space for the realization of individual as well as mass consciousness, of a new and ultimately political way of putting reason and feeling back together. It is in this context that one understands James' lifelong attachment to cricket. In *Beyond a Boundary*, surely a founding text of cultural studies, James countered both bourgeois fetishists of high-cul-

tural value and prole-cult enthusiasts with perhaps the finest example of West Indian cultural appropriation.

In fact, it appears that James came to politics through cricket, an art he found fully equal to dance, theater, or opera. As Buhle notes from Sylvia Wynter's fine work on James, "James' cricketers struggled to realize themselves on the pitch," reaching toward an autonomy and a radical historicity that effectively traced the "disguised processes of emancipation." (The cricket film *Playing Away*, set in Brixton and written by young black British writer Caryl Phillips, is indebted to such insights.)

Not for nothing does Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism* situate James' test in relation to early New Left monuments like E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. "What do they know of cricket who only cricket know?" James wrote. It is a question that all of his writings of Marxism, politics and history had prepared him to ask.

Among many other things, those writings, spanning 50 years, give the lie to Harold Cruse's dictum in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* that American Marxism has been a kind of intellectual chain gang for black radicals, inevitably putting the cuffs on the question of race. It is fascinating to watch Pan-African James grapple with a moment in which, as Alan Wald's *The New York Intellectuals* and Buhle's own *Marxism in the U.S.A.* recently reminded us, a small but thriving Marxist culture existed in the U.S. Galvanized by Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, James made anti-racism and anti-colonialism major Trotskyist issues—coming into his own as one of this tendency's foremost theorists, constantly attracting brilliant disciples and comrades.

**Black by popular demand:** James crucially theorized the relationship of black nationalism to black class consciousness; as he put it in *The Black Jacobins*, "the race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics.... But to neglect

the racial factor as merely incidental [is] an error only less grave than to make it fundamental." James' insights have proved indispensable to such recent work as Paul Gilroy's *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, whose premise is that for black people, race is the medium in which class is lived, and to reduce the problem to either of these overlapping grids (cultural nationalism or economic determinism) is inadequate. James indeed pinned his Marxist hopes on American blacks, whose hatred of bourgeois society he believed outstripped that of any other sector of the U.S.

In James' view, blacks themselves—and not in some left party's name, least of all the Communist Party's—would act independently upon American democracy, in the process transforming the prospects for socialism. *Prisoners of the American Dream*, Mike Davis' savage dismissal of the Democratic Party's usefulness and hostility to black and Hispanic workers ("50 million strong"), is only the most unrelenting recent example of James' vision.

These ideas are available in Buhle's biography of James, but at a certain price. Buhle has a sententious streak that appears to strive for James' prophetic laconicism but too often misses the mark. And Buhle's strong suit, the history of the Marxist left, intrudes at untoward moments, substituting sectarian squabbles for historical context, political groupuscules for cultural formations.

This habit also obscures certain of James' private motivations, such as his relationships with women. James, almost alone on the Marxist left, worked in an emphatically collective spirit with remarkable

women like Constance Webb and Raya Dunayevskaya; but he had a tendency to masculinist mentorship, bound up with sexual intimacy, that Buhle leaves unexamined (though he does fault James for only incidentally concerning himself with matters of gender). Buhle more than compensates for these lapses, however, in his lucid and dynamic portrait of a thinker who uniquely combined a vatic Marxism and a global anti-racism.

Which returns us, more or less, to Brixton. In this as in most political questions, James was ever disdainful of left party bureaucracy, and had an unshakable faith in what he once called "the elemental urge to socialism." (Buhle cracks that some of James' compeers have found him altogether too mystical.) Always a believer in the inherent validity of spontaneous mass actions, James' map of the elemental urge stretched from the medieval "free" cities, the British Levellers and the Paris Commune to the Petrograd Soviets, Polish Solidarity and Brixton.

He would have had absolutely no patience with the depressing cant that because the uprising in Tiananmen Square was crushed it was also useless. Regarding Brixton, likewise, James articulated a social logic that continues to menace Anglo-American Prosperos: "That, my friends, is the revolution. There is no highly educated party leading the backward masses. There is no outstanding leader.... There had been no prearranged plan. They met and joined, they shouted and stormed off [note this particularly] in the direction of the Moss Side Police Station."

Eric Lott writes regularly on Caribbean politics and culture.



## Faces: The Toll of Workplace Deaths on American Families

National Safe Workplace Institute  
230 pp., \$16.95

Every year more than 10,000 workers die from workplace accidents, another 50,000 more from workplace illnesses. Who are they? *Faces: The Toll of Workplace Deaths on American Families* introduces us to Jeff Link, 25, and Bill Freeze, 19, asphyxiated in a plating factory, to Debra Beaton, a young mother of three killed when her heavy construction machinery went out of control, and to Nettie Shaw's husband Garland, a furniture maker killed

when his machine flew apart and hit him in the head.

We don't learn much about the accidents (and more's the pity, since the stories don't always reveal how preventable most of these accidents and deaths are). But we do find out a bit about the dozens of men and women selected from those killed in 1987 and 1988—their hobbies, churches, reading habits and hopes. Most of all, we learn how much their families miss them.

That's a special contribution that grew out of the experience of Joseph A. Kinney, who founded the National Safe Workplace Institute and published this book in response to his anger and frustration about his brother's death in a workplace accident. The book includes several short essays by experts on topics such as sending the boss to jail and casualties on the farm, as well as media coverage of workplace health and safety. (Available from the institute, 122 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, \$16.95.)

—David Moberg

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Sprout



By Jim Naureckas

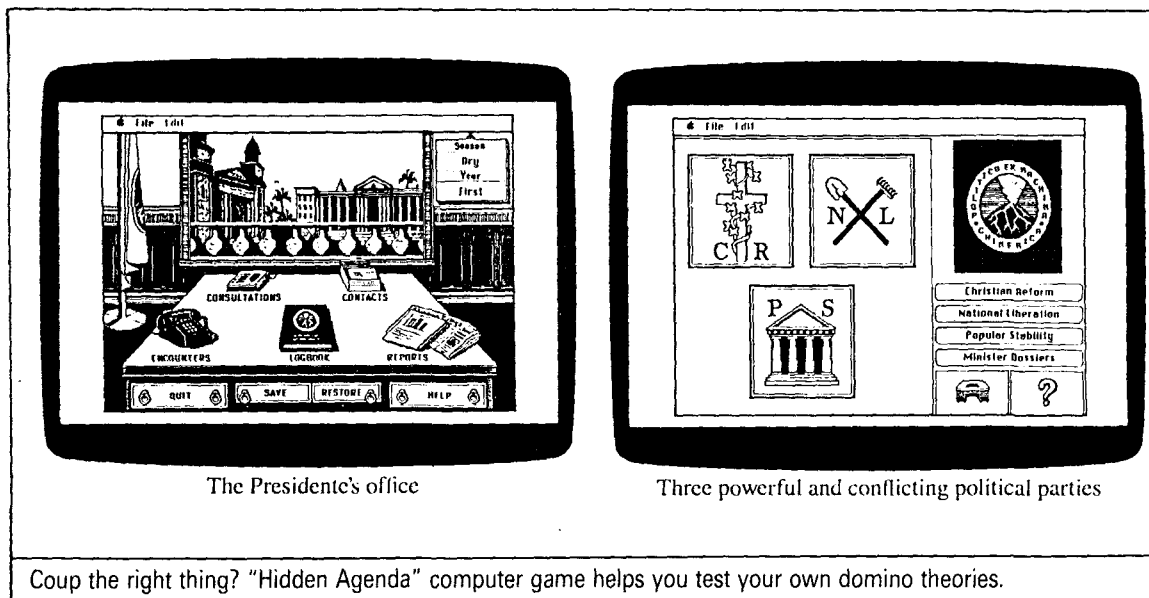
## Game effort in chimerical coups

**T**HINK YOU COULD DO BETTER THAN Duarte? Out-govern Ortega? Second-guess Cerezo? Thanks to a new computer game called "Hidden Agenda," you can have your chance.

The premise is that, like Woody Allen in the film *Bananas*, you have suddenly become *el presidente* of a troubled Central American country, known as Chimerica. While you can't make everyone wear their underwear on the outside, like Allen's dictator, you do have a remarkable degree of freedom to move the country in the direction you desire.

Your first and perhaps most crucial decision is the creation of a coalition Cabinet. Should you fill it with guerrilla sympathizers of the National Liberation Party, whose radical advice might lead you into a military coup? Do you want representatives of Christian Reform, who are strategically centrist but have a tendency to waffle at the worst moments? Or strongmen from the party of Popular Stability, who will advise you not to worry and to be happy about death-squad activity?

Choose well, because the four Cabinet members will be your guides through an escalating series of crises afflicting your troubled republic. You can—usually—ignore



Coup the right thing? "Hidden Agenda" computer game helps you test your own domino theories.

their advice, but do so too often and they may resign in disgust or even try to overthrow you themselves.

"Hidden Agenda" is far more open-ended than most text-based computer games. Rather than a linear plot designed by the programmer that the player must figure out how to follow, "Hidden Agenda" has a flexible plot whose development is determined by how you are perceived by other characters: The Coffee Grower, The Campesino, The U.S. Ambassador, The Bishop and so on.

(The game, however, has a limited number of outcomes. It can only end with a military coup, an electoral defeat or the completion of

### COMPUTERS

your first three-year term, after which the game presents the "verdict of history" in the form of an encyclopedia entry from the late 21st century. Try as you might to piss off the U.S., you will never be able to provoke an invasion.)

The format is used by the program's author, Jim Gasperini (brother of *In These Times* Nicaragua correspondent William Gasperini), to make the political point that leaders follow the agendas of the social groups they see as their constituencies. The game shows that wildly divergent government policies can be rational approaches to serving different social groups.

But unlike some other attempts to make games with a political subject, "Hidden Agenda" is fun. There

are moments of real drama, and the characters are developed enough so that you can find yourself forming personal attachments and grudges. TRANS Fiction Systems, the company that developed the program, is currently applying the groundbreaking design to pure entertainment in the form of a series of Star Trek games, as well as to another real-world simulation to be called "Perestroika."

Anyone with opinions about Central America will undoubtedly find something to argue about with the game designers. I was most annoyed by the fact that my right-wing regimes were always being overthrown by radical military uprisings, even after I had painstakingly purged the army. In the real world, it's much easier to be repressive than progressive, whereas the opposite seems to be the case in Chimerica.

But the flaws are only aggravating because the game is so engrossing. It seems doubly unfair when those tanks surround the national palace if you don't think you deserve it. But I suppose Somoza felt that way too.

**Jim Naureckas** is the managing editor of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs' *Washington Report on the Hemisphere*. He is not a computer nerd.

By Mark Feinberg

## Painter Pindell discovers that more than the gallery walls are all-white

**A**S A BLACK WOMAN ARTIST, Howardena Pindell has achieved a fair amount of success. She received her master's degree in fine arts from Yale. She worked at New York's Museum of Modern Art, rising to the position of associate curator before leaving in 1979. Her work has been acquired by important art world collections like Harvard's Fogg Art Museum and corporate buyers like IBM. Her resume, listing her exhibits, reviews, articles, awards, grants and projects, is over 40 pages long.

Yet there is another document that provides perhaps more insight into Pindell's career: the statistical report she produced on discrimination in the art world in 1987. According to her research, 39 prestigious New York galleries "are 100 percent white." These all-white galleries never showed the artwork of black, Hispanic, Asian or Native American artists. Several other galleries had only token representation of non-white artists.

The art world, according to the soft-spoken, unassuming Pindell, is a tight-knit group of collectors, dealers and curators. What goes on at social dinners is as important as the business transacted in the gallery. Artists of color, largely excluded from both the galleries and social events, end up locked into "alternative" galleries and shows.

Pindell's art is finally expressing the pain and frustration racism has

caused in her life. In the '70s she created beautiful compositions, using small dots to create pleasing confetti-like effects. She says that her art then, like the meditation she later got involved with in India, "was like novocaine." She was desperately trying to make everything beautiful. 1979 changed all that.

**Art Crow/Jim Crow:** In the late '70s, the art world swung to the right, anticipating the nation's conservative mood. In 1979, one New York artist caused a stir by showing an exhibit of drawings called "Nigger Drawings" in Artists Space, an alternative, publicly funded exhibition space. The name of the show reportedly emerged out of the artists' involvement with the black charcoal he used.

Pindell and fellow artists of color were outraged. She led a protest to the gallery, but the group was locked out. They returned the next week and got inside, only to be told by a white woman, "How dare you come down here and tell us what to do? This is a white neighborhood."

Important figures of the art establishment, Pindell says, were also upset: they complained that the protesters were pushing censorship. Pindell countered that artistic freedom is not threatened by a healthy respect for other peoples.

"I became a demon of the art world," she says. Pindell learned that hip, funky artists aren't as progressive as most people assume. "You think that just because they're artists, they're liberals. But they're not," she says. "There's an old saying, 'Scratch a liberal and out comes a racist.'"

Pindell's colleagues at the museum began to give her the cold shoulder. They had never invited her to the all-important social dinners after work, but now they began to ignore her at work as well. She decided to leave.

1979 was also the year Pindell was involved in a serious car accident. She damaged her hip and rib and lost much of her memory. Her artwork since then largely chronicles her struggle to recapture pieces of her memory. Eyes are common icons in her work, representing islands of visual memory. Often she cuts postcards or photographs into strips; between the strips of the photographs, she continues the image in paint, creating a staccato symbol of a struggling memory.

**The going gets rough:** Pindell's work has become less beautiful, more rugged. Often she loosely sews together pieces of unframed canvas, applying thickly textured swipes of paint. And, while dealing with the

painful aftermath of the accident, she has begun putting more of her own long-pent-up pain into her work. As Pindell's artwork has tried

### ART

to make sense of a damaged memory, so too is it trying to make sense of a life damaged by racism.

In her stunning video, "Free, White and 21," Pindell alternately is shown as herself and a white woman wearing dark sunglasses. As herself, she tells true tales of living with racism—all stories that happened to her. As the white woman, she voices comments she has heard from whites. At the end of the video, Pindell—as herself—wraps white gauze around her head, mummifying, binding

**Howardena Pindell eschews art that is "like novocaine" for work with real feeling—even if it is painful.**

ing herself in white.

In the '60s and '70s, Pindell says, she was "put down for not doing art that was political and didactic." Now that Pindell's work is loaded with strong personal and political messages, "everyone thinks I'm wonderful." Well, almost everyone.

Pindell says she has been running into "censorship problems with corporations in terms of the political content of my work." Despite her past sales to important establishment collectors, she says, "I am not exactly a corporate darling."

When asked how she sees the artist's role in today's environment, Pindell says she's not sure. But she knows that her "particular role is to share the wealth—a wealth of information from my experiences. And I can put it together in a pattern that makes sense."

Pindell's report on discrimination has gotten modest coverage in the press. But it has circulated around the country like a chain letter. And there has been talk about similar studies being undertaken in other cities.

While things are a little better than they used to be, Pindell says the art world is still an unregulated, largely racist industry. Unfortunately for Pindell and her colleagues of color, discrimination in the art world can always be passed off as aesthetic taste. Even when that taste inexplicably leads to 100 percent all-white exhibition seasons.

**Mark Feinberg** is a writer living in Massachusetts.



# Ithaca

Continued from page 6

authority to communities. Rent control, for instance, potentially a big progressive issue in a college town like Ithaca, can only be imposed here if the state legislature grants that authority to the town.

"There is a limit to what you can do in city government," says Cohen. "What we are going to have to do is concentrate on a few issues and help a few constituencies." He cited as examples of initiatives he wants to see under Nichols and the progressive (so far it's five to four) city council, "better treatment of and opportunities for the city's youth" and "stronger plant-closing legislation."

Both Cohen and Hoffman say that with the biggest hurdle crossed in gaining control over city hall, the coalition itself needs attention. Says Hoffman, "The people who have been working primarily inside the govern-

ment who have supported Ben—those of us on the city council and on the committees in government—need to be talking with the people who have been working on the outside. We've got to have discussions that go beyond what do we do this week."

**The possible:** Nichols is aware of both the limits of power in city government and of the divergent goals and priorities of his own coalition. "This election is not about transforming society, about bringing socialism to Ithaca," he explains, "because that simply can't be done on the local level. But there are things you can do. This has always been a very practical campaign about what we can do to help people. It's been the idea of people over profits, better jobs, labor contracts, local instead of national businesses, better opportunity for our kids and control over development so we can get better housing for people who need it."

The prospect for a "brown" Ithaca faces two imminent hurdles: the November cam-

paign against Republican Cookingham and the selection on January 1 by the new council of a replacement to fill Nichol's vacant seat. The fall campaign will likely further consolidate the new coalition, but filling Nichols' vacant seat could test its solidarity. It takes six council votes to name a replacement, and the council minority, probably with four votes out of nine, can be expected to attempt to divide the majority to prevent it from gaining a sixth vote. Without that sixth vote, Nichols' initiatives could still prevail—in Ithaca, the mayor votes in cases of a tie—but as Hoffman observes, "It would be much better if we didn't have to do it that way on every major issue."

Meanwhile, the coalition is savoring this rare victory of a socialist candidate and a progressive campaign. "Jesse said to keep hope alive," said Cohen with a tired smile. "We're doing it here."

**Dave Lindorff** is a freelance journalist based in Spencer, N.Y.

# Poland

Continued from page 9

space, equipment and even labor time to private firms, which brings in capital but increases inequality within the factory.

For example, the Italian firm Saime proposed to lease space in a wooden-crate shop in the city of Limanowa, a town of 20,000 in southern Poland, installing new machines to produce crates for export from local lumber. The general manager was delighted at potential profits to the plant. But in a referendum, the plant's 500 employees voted down the proposal. The Limanowa workers objected to dividing the plant—and themselves—into a high-tech, high-earnings section and a dilapidated, low-productivity section. There must be a better way, they said.

**The plural of property:** To the liberals, the Limanowa plant simply voted for poverty. It is precisely these risk-averse enterprises that should have their subsidies cut and be turned over to free enterprise. Two key members of the new Mazowiecki Cabinet share this view: Tadeusz Syryjczyk, a "Krakow liberal" who is minister for industry, and Leszek Balcerowicz, a Warsaw University professor who is minister for finance.

Neither Mazowiecki nor Walesa wants such shock treatment. They believe it is incompatible with the Catholic Church's social teachings, and they fear, with good reason, that it might provoke uncontrollable violence in the streets and factories.

To avoid this the social democrats must devise an effective third way between the monopolistic state and sink-or-swim capitalism. One element would be to stress a pluralism of property forms: private holdings (especially for farms and small businesses), cooperative or joint stock ownership for others. Attracting foreign capital ought to occur on mutually beneficial terms, not as a scramble to sell off whatever is not nailed down. And new decision-making methods must be specified for the ministries, private capital, management and workers' representatives in the factory councils and trade unions.

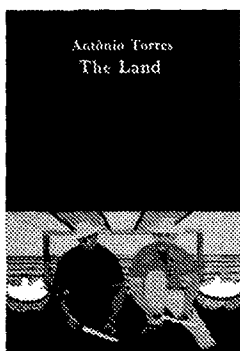
Workers' strikes created Solidarity in 1980 and put it on the road to the Mazowiecki government in 1988. Whether the rank and file gives its support to the reform program is the concern of new Minister for Labor and Social Welfare Jacek Kuron. He has a long history of organizing support for workers and is a persuasive public speaker not afraid of voicing unpopular opinions.

It's an open question whether Kuron will use his job to sell a liberal version of reform to the workers or fight on their behalf for a more social democratic one.

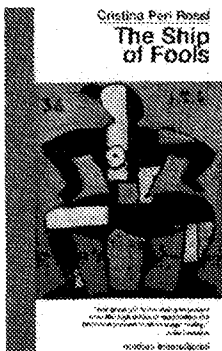
**Franek Michalski** covers developments in Poland for *In These Times*.

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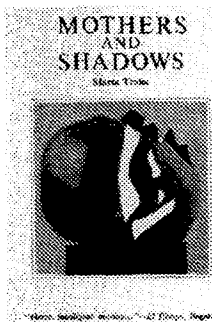
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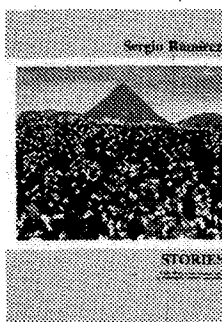
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The Labor Coalition on Central America seeks half-time paid DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR for new national publication. Focus: International labor solidarity. Location: Washington, DC, or San Francisco Bay area. Contact: Editorial Board, *Labor Action-Central America*, Box 28014, Oakland, CA 94604, (415) 272-9951.

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JEWISH CURRENTS, September 1989 issue. "Art-Bashing as a Political Sport," editorial; "Black-Jewish Coalition: Troubled but Still Alive," Albert Vorspan; "Carl G. Jung's Shadow," Herman H. Weiner. Single issue: \$1.50 plus 75c postage. Subscription: \$15 yearly (USA). JEWISH CURRENTS, Dept. T, Suite 601, 22 E. 17 St., New York, NY 10003.

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### NEW YORK

#### September 20-22

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL WEDNESDAY, Sept. 20-The Mayoral Elections and Progressive Politics; Bill Henning, Utrice Leid and others; 8 p.m. THURSDAY, Sept. 21-Charter Revision: Perestroika for the Ruling Class?; Bob Fitch, Jackson Chin, Leslie Low and Angelo Falcon; 8 p.m. FRIDAY Sept. 22-Beyond the Democratic Party, Lenni Brenner, 8 p.m.

All events take place at the Brecht Forum, 79 Leonard St. (five blocks below Canal, between Church and Broadway). Unless otherwise listed, admission is \$5. For information call (212) 941-0332. Classes begin October 2.

**October 26-29**  
GRASS-ROOTS COMMUNICATIONS for Democratic Social, Cultural and Political Change. Union for Democratic Communications 1989 Conference and Annual Meeting. Hunter and Marymount Manhattan College, New York City. Information: Mark Schulman, City College of New York, Shepard Hall 16, New York, NY 10031, (212) 690-6741

### SEATTLE

#### September 23

The Seattle Rainforest Action Group and other co-sponsors present The Lacandone Rainforest Project Conference, "A Common Destiny," from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Discovery Park. The future of the Mayan Lacandone, whose lives are intimately linked to the land, rests with the future of their rainforests. Although part of their homeland is a designated biological reserve, much has already been destroyed, and what remains is seriously threatened from deforestation. Conference goals include educating the public about the Lacandone culture and exploring ways to help in preserving their forests. Bringing together the Lacandone and six Northwest Indian tribes, this conference will be a unique experience for the audience and the Lacandone leaders, who have never before left their forest homeland. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. For information contact The Lacandone Rainforest Project, P.O. Box 95967, Seattle, WA 98145; Lisa Dabek, (206) 547-2378, or Kurt Russo, (206) 647-6258.

### CHICAGO

#### September 23

Illinois Labor History Society presents "Writers as Workers," a symposium examining the literary and political significance of the WPA Writers' Project in Illinois, which created the famous *WPA Guide to Illinois* in 1939. Among the working writers attending the 50th anniversary reunion are Studs Terkel, Margaret Walker, Maridel LeSeur, Franklin Folsom, Sam Ross, Marion Knoblauch Franc and Dave Peltz. Top-flight scholars Jerre Mangione, Alan Wald, Douglas Wixson, Michael Anania, Lorraine Brown, Neil Harris and J. Fred MacDonald will participate. The event takes place at the Newberry Library of Chicago (60 W. Walton St.) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The symposium is co-sponsored with the cooperation of READ ILLINOIS, a program of the Illinois State Library and the Secretary of State, Jim Edgar. For information contact: Alan Harris Stein, Pro-

ject Director, or Leslie F. Orear, I.L.H.S. President, at (312) 663-4107.

**September 23**  
CHICAGO DSA presents a memorial celebration of Michael Harrington's life and works on Saturday, 12 noon at ACTWU Hall, 333 S. Ashland. Invited guests include Rev. Jim Gorman, Roberta Lynch, Carl Shier, Studs Terkel and William Julius Wilson. Call 384-0327 for information. Parking available at the Hall.

**September 24**  
The Jewish Council on Urban Affairs and Congregation Ezra Hahonim present: AGENDA '89. "Remember Us for Life" at 10 a.m., 2620 W. Touhy Avenue. Among the scheduled speakers are Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan, Arnette Hubbard, Madelyn Iris and Rabbi Richard Marger. For more information call (312) 743-0154.

**October 6-8**  
"Palestinian Statehood: Justice, Liberation and Democracy." The Palestine Human Rights Campaign urges you to join us in Chicago the weekend of October 6-8 for our 12th annual conference. Featured speakers will include: Faisal Hussein, Israel Shakah, Nabil Sha'ath and Philip Klutznick, among many others. For more information, contact PHRC at 220 S. State, #1308, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 987-1830.

### TAHLEQUAH, OK

#### October 4-7

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma presents a symposium: "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Thoughts for a New Generation," at the Western Hills Guest Ranch. Featured speakers include Molly Yard, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Chief Wilma Mankiller, Judge Lisa Richette, Dr. Rayna Green, Joy Harjo and Erin Moriarty. Topics include women and health, education, professional development, spirituality, family and an historical perspective on the contributions of women. The symposium will allow rural and Midwestern women, both Indian and non-Indian, the chance to participate in a national women's conference within their own region. Conference cost is \$85, includes all sessions and four meals. Special room rates, tours and activities are also offered. For more information contact Cherokee Nation, (918) 456-0671, Ext. 416 or 248.

### INDIANA, PA

#### October 18-20

IUP Symposium, "Searching for New Horizons: The University at the Gateway of the 21st Century." Speakers include Stanley Aronowitz, Bernard Harleston, Nathan Glazer, Paul Loeb, Sheila Slaughter and Madeleine Grumet. Contact: Irwin Marcus, History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705, (412) 357-2237 or 2284.

### WASHINGTON, DC

#### Fall 1989

The Washington School Fall Program of Politics, Ideas and Culture. *Evening Courses* beginning October 11: Drug Policy and the Latin American Cocaine Industry, Safeguarding Abortion Rights, Beyond 20th Century Politics, What's Wrong With This Picture? The Black Character in Mainstream Film, Internationalism Today. *Special Events*: October 27: Poet, essayist and playwright June Jordan; November 30: Philosopher of education Henry Giroux; December 15: Theologian and social critic Cornel West. The Continuing Education Project of The Institute for Policy Studies, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 234-9382.

## LIFE IN HELL

### LIFE IN HELL

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GETTING YOUR HEAD CHOPPED OFF BY A GUILLOTINE WOULD BE WEIRD.

WHAT WOULD BE GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND WHEN YOU GOT CLAMPED IN?

WOULD YOU SQUIRM OR WOULD YOU JUST SIT THERE?

WOULD YOU YELL OR WOULD YOU JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT?

WHAT WOULD YOUR LAST THOUGHTS BE AS THE BLADE STARTED TO FALL?

BONGO! QUIT DAYDREAMING AND PAY ATTENTION.

WOW.



# WORLD

run down



## By Jeff Salamon

*There are more political groups today than in the '60s. Have a discussion with Jackson Browne today. Compare it to anything Dylan ever said.*

—Abbie Hoffman,  
in an interview with *Tikkun*

**T**here's one moment on Jackson Browne's best album, *The Pretender*, that could form the seedbed for a worthwhile political art. In the middle of "The Fuse," a song whose theme boils down to "Today is the first day of the rest of your life," Browne suddenly cries, "Oh Lord, are there really people starving still?" No matter how calculated the naiveté is, it's an embarrassing moment. But it hits with more force than anything on Browne's latest album.

*World in Motion* is Browne's second record of mostly political broadsides. After a decade of apparently believing that Southern California encompassed the entire globe, Browne has discovered a few other places—Pretoria, Managua and Washington, D.C., for instance. Like Joni Mitchell and Lou Reed, he's abandoned an intensely personal mode of songwriting for a hectoring brand of social commentary. The sentiments are usually on the money (how many other

records get a full-page, four-color ad in *The Nation*?), the problem is making good rock'n'roll out of them. And for Browne, it's a real problem. Here's a typical couplet:

*Things like hunger, greed and hatred  
One way or another, gonna be eradicated.*

Here's another:

*We come here to sing for freedom  
And to send our voices to the ones  
who need them.*

**Browne out:** Fitting specific social concerns to rock'n'roll may be difficult, but it's not *that* difficult. The problem with Browne is that when he soberly addresses issues from a radical perspective, he forgets what is inherently radical in rock'n'roll (and even in the music of some sensitive singer-songwriters): the subversive power of fun. In 10 syllables "a-wop-bop-alu-bop-a-wop-bam-boom" says more about revolutionary consciousness than Browne's earnest lyrics do over the course of an entire LP.

When Little Richard first recorded "Tutti-Frutti" he was actually singing a version that had been cleaned up lyrically, to make the song more palatable for a radio audience. In spite of—or, who knows, maybe because of—that censorship, Richard's careening vocal is charged with unembarrassed sexual desire. It is in the nonsense syllables that this desire is expressed, that one can

find a sort of secret language that oppressed people the world over are longing to speak. Browne was raised speaking it, and now he acts like he's forgotten it.

Which is strange. Like so many people, Browne has surveyed the suffering and misery of the world and felt embarrassed by the freedom and affluence he enjoys. But rather than examine this tension—from which real art could spring—Browne's solution is to leave himself out of the picture. The voice that dominates the album comes from nowhere. The indignation that motivates it and the relentless, almost teleological optimism it expresses never meet.

On the one hand, this is just plain dishonest; on the other, it's bad for art. It's no accident that the best song here is the cover version of Nicaraguan Interior Minister/poet Tomas Borge's "My Personal Revenge." Not because Browne's delivery is particularly inspired (though it's not bad), but because Borge doesn't conceal his own experience. Imagining a time when his oppressors will thrive in the compassionate society he has overthrown them to build, Borge allows his outrage and optimism to mix—ironically, passionately, even humorously.

Browne, on the other hand, would rather come off as a bland, revolutionary Everyman. He doesn't imagine that an affluent white man can have anything worthwhile to say about suffering people—as if our own country hasn't had its struggles, as if Browne didn't live through some of them, as if he weren't living through some of them now. As if many of the freedoms we enjoy aren't the ones people all over the world are fighting for.

This self-abnegation is a shame. Here, for instance, is how the poet Carl Dennis deals with the tension of having what others don't:

*'Til Guatemala came up,  
Each of us sitting in the yard last night  
Was eager to have his say, whatever  
the topic....*

*How wonderful, we said, the things  
people do*

*To inscribe the empty stretch of the  
year with punctuation:*

*Dances and birthday recitals, parades  
and planting festivals,*

*The dawn songs one of us heard years  
ago in Guatemala*

*When the Indians still felt like singing.  
That's when the talk faltered. It*

*seemed crude  
To mention that ruined country with-  
out lingering.*

*It seemed foolish to waste our time  
with the obvious:*

*Why the few landowners refuse to  
share,*

*Why they'd rather thin the Indians out  
like deer....*

*It cramps the soul to think about it  
too long....*

*One of us should have remarked how  
far the stars looked,*

*How glad he was to know they  
hadn't been made*

*In the heart's image but lived apart,  
Indifferent and impervious.*

*Then our talk might have begun again.  
(from "Guatemala")*

One doesn't have to commit the critical fallacy of mistaking rock lyrics for poetry to note there's a standard of

honesty worth pursuing. Browne, after all, is someone who once helped invent a genre of songwriting that prized sincerity above all other virtues.

**Motion sickness:** Musically, Browne reaches a queasy compromise as well. Most of the music on *World in Motion* is slickly produced but emotionally vapid—a little U2 sturm und drang, a couple of synthesizer shivers, some Toto-esque pop. And for a guy who's always watching his white imperialist ass, Browne seems oddly unaware of the iffy consequences of playing hunt and peck with Third World culture. The insertion of African rhythms and timbres and Latin guitar into otherwise ordinary pop songs gives one the undeniable feeling of World Beat Lite, or worse. On "When the Stone Begins to Turn," Malian pop singer Salif Keita ornaments Browne's pleas for South African liberation only to sound trapped in the bland arrangement.

As for that epigram up top, Browne actually evokes Dylan once on this record. Of course, there are two Dylans one might choose to summon up. The first is the folkie Bob Dylan, whose didactic protest songs were repudiated by the second, whose surreal lyrics and stripped-down garage rock embodied a generation's rebellion without actually claiming to. So which Dylan does Browne echo in this chorus from "How Long"?

*How long can you hear someone  
crying?*

*How long can you hear someone  
dying?*

*Before you ask yourself why?*

*And how long will we hear people  
speaking*

*About missiles for peace*

*And just let it go by?*

The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.

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